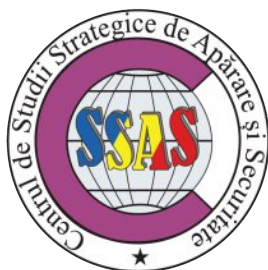


**“CAROL I” NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY  
CENTRE FOR DEFENCE AND SECURITY STRATEGIC STUDIES**



# STRATEGIC IMPACT

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

The hereby edition represents no. 2 in 2020 (vol. 75) and includes a collection of six articles, to which is added the *Dynamics of the Security Environment* section, followed by a *Strategic Dialogue* on the same subject.

The rubric *NATO and EU: Policies, Strategies, Actions* opens the journal, and one can read an analysis of the effects of relations between Romania and NATO for national security, in the article elaborated by Mrs. Andreea-Roxana Olteanu, titled *Romania – NATO relations: Three Decades of Dialogue and Transformation Concerning Security*.

The second rubric – *Security and Military Strategy* – comprises three articles: the first, *The “Mosaic” Warfare: A New American Strategy for the Future*, which presents the new concepts introduced by the “mosaic” type war and represents an analysis conducted by Mr. Crăișor-Constantin Ioniță, PhD, on the importance that the future typology of conflicts will have in the elaboration of the main strategic documents of NATO Member States, including Romania. The second article, belonging to Mrs. Diana Cristiana Lupu, deals with the subject of *political-military leadership and military command within the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO)*. The paper gives the readers an account of some of the similarities and differences between NATO and WTO, the position adopted by Romania, as a WTO Member State, in relation to the command and control mechanisms is reviewed, a position appreciated by researchers in the field as an important contribution to the WTO becoming a modern, mature and multilateral organisation. The third article belongs to Márta Pákozdi and György Bárdos, PhD, and aims at learning more about and demonstrating *soldiers’ motivations* and comparing them to the needs identified in the military need-hierarchy model, as well as identifying those motivational factors which help them continue in the military service.

In the section *Geopolitics and Geostrategy – Trends and Perspectives*, we have grouped two articles. Mr. Attila Racz, PhD, and Mr. Stelian Tampu conducted an analysis on *The Irregular Mass Migration from the Civilian Perspective*, phenomenon which has reached huge proportions in the last years. The second article, *The Evolution of the International System in the Context of Climatic Changes in the Arctic*, written by Mr. Mihai-Răzvan Ilea, demonstrated how, due to dramatic climate changes that have occurred in the polar territories recently, more and more international actors are actively involved in the development of the area. The author wishes to emphasise that, throughout this process of zonal development, Russia’s actions to protect and exploit the Arctic territories come to support the previous hypothesis.

You will also find the section *Dynamics of the Security Environment (DSE)*, which comprises six materials, developed by CDSSS researchers, which analyse the most important evolutions of the first half of 2020. Thus, Cristian Băhnăreanu, PhD Senior Researcher, highlights *the economic impact of the pandemics*; next, Alexandra Sarcinschi, PhD Senior Researcher, analyses the distinction between the terms “social distance” and “physical distance”, identifying their impact on the societal security sector, in the article *Measures and Consequences of Managing COVID-19 Pandemic: from Physical Distance to Social Distance*. Cristina Bogzeanu, PhD Senior Researcher, presents an estimate of the degree to which the impact of the pandemic on European cohesion can affect the continuation of projects subject to the development of EU



strategic autonomy, under the title *European Defence – Change of Course in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic?* Mihai Zodian, PhD Researcher, explores the main events in East Asia, in the nuclear field, from a perspective that combines realism and the transition of power, in the article entitled *The COVID-19 Pandemic and International Relations' Uncertainties*. Mirela Atanasiu, PhD Senior Researcher, identifies *security effects and geopolitical trends generated by the COVID-19 pandemic in the Middle East*, based on the analysis of the evolution of a series of quantitative and qualitative indicators. Mr. Crăișor-Constantin Ioniță, PhD Researcher, approaches the *Libyan conflict and its destabilising impact on North Africa*.

In this edition, we publish a Strategic Dialogue with Doctor Beatrice Mahler, Manager of the “Marius Nasta” Institute of Pneumophthisiology, in Bucharest, Romania, on the management of challenges and effects related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regarding the scientific manifestations of the CDSSS, we wish to reiterate the invitation to register with papers, at the *Strategy XXI Conference* entitled *The Complex and Dynamic Nature of the Security Environment*, to be held in November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020. In order to do so, please access the platform <https://www.strategii21.ro/index.php/en/conferences-strategies-xxi/the-centre-for-defence-and-security-strategic-studies-conference>.

For those who read for the first time *Strategic Impact*, it is an open-access peer reviewed journal, edited by the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies and published with the support of the “Carol I” National Defence University Publishing House, and, according to the National Council for Titles, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU), the publication is a prestigious scientific journal in the field of military sciences, information and public order.

*Strategic Impact* is being printed in Romanian language for twenty years and in English for fifteen years and approaches a complex thematic: political-military topicality; security and military strategy; NATO and EU policies, strategies and actions; geopolitics and geostrategies; information society and intelligence. Readers may find in the pages of the publication analyses, syntheses and evaluations of strategic level, points of view which study the impact of national, regional and global actions dynamics.

Regarding international visibility – the primary objective of the journal – the recognition of the publication’s scientific quality is confirmed by its indexing in the international databases CEEOL (Central and Eastern European Online Library, Germany), EBSCO (USA), ProQuest (USA) and, in addition, WorldCat and ROAD ISSN, but also its presence in virtual catalogues of libraries of prestigious institutions abroad, such as NATO and of universities with military profile in Bulgaria, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia etc.

*Strategic Impact* is printed in two distinct editions, both in Romanian and English language. The journal is distributed free of charge in main institutions in the field of security and defence, in the academia and abroad – in Europe, Asia and America.

In the end, we would like to encourage those interested to publish in our journal to prospect and evaluate thoroughly the dynamics of the security environment and, also, we invite the interested students, Master Students and Doctoral Candidates to submit articles for publication in the monthly supplement of the journal, *Strategic Colloquium*, available on the Internet at <http://cssas.unap.ro/ro/cs.htm>, indexed in the international database CEEOL, Google scholar and ROAD ISSN.

**Editor-in-chief, Colonel Florian CÎRCIUMARU, PhD**  
**The Director of the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies**



# ROMANIA – NATO RELATIONS: THREE DECADES OF DIALOGUE AND TRANSFORMATION CONCERNING SECURITY

*Andreea-Roxana OLTEANU\**

*In 2020, there will be 30 years since the initiation of the first official and permanent contacts between Romania and NATO. In the three decades, Romania's security has undergone a complex transformation process, spanning from overcoming the relative international isolation, the access to security guarantees and improved relations with the actors in the region, to internal institutional modernization. Without being the only determining factor in these developments, the dialogue with NATO was, however, one of the main variables of change. The Alliance generated benchmarks for transformation, assistance in its implementation, as well as successive progress assessments, placing at the end of this change, first the promise of membership and, subsequently, the protection granted by the Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.*

*Starting from the analysis of Romania's internal and external situation in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the current paper aims at making an additional contribution to a better understanding of the effects, in the field of national security, of the relation to NATO. The research reviews not only part of the parameters and mechanisms of change, but also Romania's context of action in 2020, as a member of the Alliance, in comparison to its situation in 1990.*

**Keywords:** *Romania – NATO relations; military reform; national security; transformation of security; Allied security; Romania's profile within NATO.*

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## Introduction

This year marks three decades since the initiation of the first official and permanent contacts between Romania and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In the thirty years of relations, both the Alliance and the security situation of Romania have undergone consistent transformation processes.

Within the International Relations Theory or within the Security Studies, NATO's activity and the post-1990 transformation of the Alliance have been some of the most prominent research topics of the last three decades. Its preservation during the post-Cold War period, the effects of enlargement process or the dynamics of the relations with the Russian Federation were only some of the topics explored within the academic literature.

In the early 1990s, the neorealist authors, such as John Mearsheimer or Stephen Walt, anticipated the disintegration of NATO, the eventual fall of the European continent into a spiral of insecurity and competition for power (ideas highlighted through analyses such as *Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War*, published by Mearsheimer, in 1990) or the decoupling of the European security concerns from those of the United States. However, not only with NATO's survival, but also with the Alliance's expansion and its new missions (the involvement in the Balkans, the commitment to the fight against terrorism), the research focused on its evolution became more diverse. Thus, there were further approaches not necessarily the prospects of dissolution, but the reasons of the post-1990 continuity of the Alliance (for instance, the reinforcement of the common security interests of the members with historical ties and common values, the resistance of the bureaucracy of the organization to its dissolution or the reshaping of its missions) and the role on the security of Central and Eastern Europe.

On this last topic, researches mainly encompassed two types of approaches: one focused on the positive role of NATO in the region, related to its involvement in driving the modernization of the security sectors of the former communist states and in improving the regional relations, and another that rather highlighted the limits or the side effects of the enlargement (such as fuelling the Russian Federation's resentments, the reduced capacity of new members to make a contribution to Allies' security). Concerning the levels of analysis, research is also divided, between the state-centric and international views on security, and the perspectives that are rather focused on the internal security environment.

Starting from this diverse body of academic literature, this paper is aimed at making an additional contribution to a better understanding of Bucharest – NATO relations, providing, at the same time, an overview of the effects of the dialogue with the Alliance on Romania's national security, at three decades of interaction between the two actors. Without positioning itself within the debate on the Alliance's





enlargement, the analysis rather highlights the positive effects of this relationship on Romania, while the dichotomy between the influence on the external security behaviour and the guidance of the internal transformation is overcome by an integrated approach of the two dimensions.

In the article, by the concept of *transformation of security* we will refer to three types of mutations, concerning: the situation of the security guarantees, the quality of the regional relations, respectively the activity of the internal security sector (its functioning on democratic foundations, professionalization, re-evaluation of planning processes, endowment etc.)<sup>1</sup>.

Through *interaction with NATO* we will refer to three complementary actions of the Alliance in its security relations with Romania: providing benchmarks for security transformation, monitoring and supporting progress, respectively evaluating and gratifying results. The paper comprises a brief analysis of Romania's security situation at the beginning of its democratic transition, an assessment on the relations to NATO up to 2004, when Romania joined the Alliance, respectively an overview of the post-2004 developments and of Romania's current security, followed by a section of conclusions, which come to complete the main thesis of the paper.

## 1. Romania's Security Situation at the End of the Cold War

Romania begun its journey towards democracy with a security situation marked, both internally and externally, by a weak adaptation to the post-Cold War period.

**Internally**, the state had a security sector that, beyond certain advantages – such as the existence of its own military doctrine, the relative independence of the planning processes (non-existent in other Warsaw Treaty states) or the presence of an active defence industry –, was, on the one hand, in the situation of not being adapted to the new security challenges or to the security objectives of the post-communist Romania and, on the other, in the specific case of not benefiting of a previous experience of democratic functioning. At the time of leaving communism, the military doctrine was focused, under Yugoslavian inspiration and following the events of 1968 in Czechoslovakia, around the idea of war of the whole people, which involved preparing all citizens to withstand a possible external attack. In a world that was about to overcome a paradigm of war and that was increasingly relying on small armies, which compensate for the dimensions through performance and professionalism, Romania found itself, from this perspective, behind the evolutions of the period. The armed forces, based on career militaries and conscripts, recruited the latter in large numbers, with an increased size of the security sector and a level

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<sup>1</sup> A.N.: Within this paper, the concept of *security sector* is defined according to the Romanian legislation, which stipulates the institutions responsible for the national security (Law no. 51/1991).



of militarization that was, in 1990, in relation to the total population of the country, above the degree of militarization of the United States (0.86%, versus 0.81%)<sup>2</sup>. Some of the institutions in charge of security had been set up immediately after the events of December 1989, without benefiting neither from functioning mechanisms nor from the legislative and strategic framework to guide their activity. Moreover, after almost half a century of communist dictatorship, neither the political elite nor the society had the knowledge and training to understand security issues and to exert a real democratic control over the institutional sector responsible for ensuring it<sup>3</sup>.

*Externally*, Romania has begun its democratic journey as a member of a collective security framework on the brink of dissolution, without solid partnerships, with sensitive relations with both its Warsaw Treaty allies (as a result of the autonomous policy from the communist period) as well as with the Western actors (due to their lack of confidence in the post-1989 internal developments and to the communist legacy in terms of fragile bilateral interactions). In the immediate vicinity, the relations with Hungary were tensed even before 1990, while in Transnistria and in the Balkans they were already on the verge of erupting in confrontations – that, in the first case, had evolved into a frozen conflict and, in the second, in a yet untapped accumulation of security issues.

The Paris Charter for a New Europe, which, sanctioned through its content, in November 1990, the end of the Cold War, found Romania in a difficult internal and external context. The end of the bipolar confrontation did not equate, for Bucharest and for the continent, with an end of history and the establishment of a Kantian peace, as anticipated by Fukuyama. The evolution of the post-1989 context was, rather, dual: while a part of the continent, respectively the democratic West, continued to be a conflict-free, institutionalized area, with ongoing integration processes, Central and Eastern Europe evolved in the opposite direction, the area being marked by the dissolution of the existing institutions, fragmentation, the emergence of open conflicts or latent tensions and an increased insecurity<sup>4</sup>. Paraphrasing two RAND reports from the early 1990s, the states in the region found themselves, in the post-communist period, in the position to transform internally and to undergo the processes related to their democratic transition in a space *devoid of any security structure capable of protecting them against threats from outside or inside the region*<sup>5</sup>, and being, at the same time, intensely armed and militarized and,

<sup>2</sup> Petre Duțu, Constantin Moștofleu, Alexandra Sarcinschi, *Profesionalizarea Armatei Române în contextul integrării în NATO*, Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies, Bucharest, 2003, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Johanna Mendelson Forman, “Security Sector Reform: What Role for Civil Society”, in Marina Caparini, Philipp Fluri, Ferenc Molnar (Eds.), *Civil Society and the Security Sector: Concept and Practices in New Democracies*, Lit Verlag, Berlin, 2006, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> Ioan Mircea Pașcu, *Bătălia pentru NATO. Raport personal*, RAO, Bucharest, 2014, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Zalmay M. Khalilzad, *Extending the Western Alliance to East Central Europe. A New Strategy for NATO*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, 1993, p. 3.



though, unable to ensure their own security<sup>6</sup>.

In this context, in Prague, in 1991, the disbanding of the Warsaw Treaty was made official. By the end of the same year, the Soviet Union also dissolved. Beyond the positive effects of diminishing the Soviet pressure on Central and Eastern Europe, the security vacuum generated by the two crashes – the Pact and its main sponsoring state – came together, for the states in the region, with the revival of nationalism, the contestation of the existing borders and the emergence of the first military conflicts, in the Balkans and on the Dniester. Given the fact that the main pan-European security forum – the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe – lacked the mechanisms, relevance or consensus to promptly cope with these challenges, the expectations of former communist states oriented, even before the official dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty, towards strengthening their relations with NATO.

## 2. From the First Contacts with NATO to Joining the Alliance

The former communist states established contacts with NATO even since they were still members of the Warsaw Treaty. In the summer of 1990, after the meeting in Turnberry and, later, after the meeting of the Heads of State and Government at the London Summit, NATO took the first steps towards opening up relations with the Central and Eastern European countries, the progress in this direction being synthesized in a phrase that made history and which stated that the Alliance was about to extend, to the new democracies, *the hand of friendship*. Specifically, NATO invited the Warsaw Treaty states to release a joint declaration on the transformation of the security relations on the continent, as well as visit the organization and establish permanent diplomatic relations<sup>7</sup>. Romania welcomed this opening through a letter addressed by Prime Minister Petre Roman to NATO Secretary General, Manfred Worner, which also included the invitation to visit Bucharest, through the delegation of the Romanian ambassador to Belgium to represent Romania's interests to the Alliance as well as through the first trips to NATO (the visits of the prime minister, of the head of the Defence Staff or of the legislative leadership, represented by Oliviu Gherman). For the first time in history, Romania thus established permanent contacts with NATO, a relation that was hardly foreseeable only a few months before and whose development became, in the following years, first the strategic objective of the country and, after 2004, the main security pillar of Romania.

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<sup>6</sup> Ronald L. Asmus, Richard L. Kugler, Stephen F. Larrabee, "Building a New NATO", in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 4, p. 29. (The study was subsequently resumed by RAND).

<sup>7</sup> \*\*\*, *London Declaration On A Transformed North Atlantic Alliance*, The North Atlantic Council, London, July 5-6, 1990, URL: <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c900706a.htm>, accessed on 12.10.2019.



The opening of the relations has been followed by the emergence of the first signs of support, from NATO, for the security changes within the former communist states (such as the creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, which provided a framework of dialogue with the Alliance, or the emergence of the Rose – Roth initiative, which was aimed at preparing the political elite and the civil society in Central and Eastern Europe to understand the post-Cold War security challenges and the organization of the Western security sectors). There were also exchanges of visits between NATO representatives and political and military leaders in Eastern Europe and were signed the first documents of military cooperation with countries such as Italy or Germany.

However, initiating and developing a dialogue with NATO came neither with the security umbrella sought by the countries in Central and Eastern Europe, nor with an implicit enlargement of the Alliance. The interest in the latter direction was boosted by the Central and Eastern European countries, who asked, in the first phase, to sign bilateral security arrangements with NATO (proposals put forward, for instance, in 1991-1992, by Poland or Czechoslovakia) and, finally, to join the Alliance (announced, by Romania as well, since 1993). Given these initiatives, the Alliance moved from not considering the possibility of welcoming new members, to a weak support for this option<sup>8</sup>, and finally, to the creation of coherent mechanisms to support the dialogue with the countries interested in accession and to prepare them to meet the requirements of NATO membership.

The launch of the Partnership for Peace, in 1994, represented, strictly for the enlargement process, a moment of balancing between the pressure of the former communist states to join NATO and the need for internal consensus for expanding the Alliance, the imperative of maintaining a constructive dialogue with Moscow and the necessity to provide the necessary time for the acceding states to meet the basic conditions for such a step.

If 1990 was marked by the establishment of the first diplomatic channels of dialogue, 1994 comprised a second, more structured, phase in the relations between the Alliance and the countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Unlike the previous mode of interaction, the Partnership provided concrete benchmarks for security transformation, generated the context for assessing the progress in this area, and placed, at the end of the entire transformation process, a clearer perspective

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<sup>8</sup> A.N.: For example, please see the transcript of the talks (Moscow, July 1991) between NATO Secretary General Manfred Wornier and the Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, where Wornier testified that only three of the 16 members of the Alliance were in favor of the enlargement process: \*\*\*, “Memorandum to Boris Yeltsin from Russian Supreme Soviet delegation to NATO HQs”, Brussels, July 3, 1991, *National Security Archive*, Washington, 2017, p. 2, URL: <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/4325708/Document-30-Memorandum-to-Boris-Yeltsin-from.pdf>, accessed on 19.10.2019.



of gaining access to the security guarantees provided by the Washington Treaty. Thus, *Framework Document* of the Partnership defined, as achievable goals, the transparency of the defence planning and budgeting, the creation of military forces compatible with those of NATO, or the cooperation concerning the planning processes and the personnel training<sup>9</sup>.

In the autumn of 1994, Bucharest assumed, under the Partnership for Peace, the Individual Action Plan (formulated on the basis of the *Presentation Document* advanced by Romania, which reflected the availability and the ambition level in the relations with the Alliance, as well as the objectives advanced by NATO and the negotiations results), followed, in 1995, by the beginning of the first cycle of the Defence Planning and Review Process, evaluated biannually. From the flexible list of 20 interoperability objectives formulated by NATO – which allowed each state to assume sections in accordance with its own capacity and interest to deepen the relationship with the Alliance –, Romania assumed 19 points, extended from the officers' language training or the training of the medical personnel, to master the symbolism of NATO maps or the availability and ability to participate in the activities of the Partnership<sup>10</sup>.

A further step in providing benchmarks for Central and Eastern European countries took place in 1995, by launching the NATO Enlargement Study. Its emergence led, in relation to the former communist states, to a double advantage: on the one hand, it clearly confirmed that NATO was going to expand, outlining the stakes or the result that could be achieved through the internal and external transformation of the former communist states; on the other hand, it offered them a more complex and complete answer regarding the preconditions to be reached in order to maximize their chances of joining NATO. The document included topics related to the existence of good neighbourly relations, the capacity to financially support the participation in the Alliance and to send specialized personnel to its structures, the availability to take part to NATO missions, transparency in the defence budgeting, the accountability of the institutions within the security sector or the existence of democratic control and oversight mechanisms<sup>11</sup>.

Providing the landmarks related to the transformations required for NATO membership, as well as creating the framework for strengthening relations with the Alliance have led to an increased interaction and an enhanced dynamism of ongoing transformative processes evolving in the former communist states. In 1996 alone, under the Partnership for Peace and given the pre-Madrid effervescence,

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<sup>9</sup> \*\*\*, *România – NATO. Carte albă*, Ministry of National Defence & Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romcartexim, Bucharest, 1996, p. 182.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 184-185.

<sup>11</sup> \*\*\*, “Study on NATO Enlargement”, *NATO*, Brussels, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1995, URL: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_24733.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_24733.htm), accessed on 04.02.2020.





Romania received over 25 visits from NATO, participated into more than 120 activities directly related to the dialogue with the Alliance<sup>12</sup> and developed more than 500 cooperation activities with the member states of NATO<sup>13</sup>. Moreover, the relations with the latter steadily increased (for instance, Romania and France carried out, in 1993, 76 joint activities, while other 44 were developed with Germany; 3 years later, in 1996, their number almost doubled, advancing to 147, respectively 106 activities). The Romanian representatives also took part in the activities and meetings of the NATO Air Defence Committee, the International Bureau for Linguistic Cooperation<sup>14</sup> etc. The interactions in these formats came as an additional opportunity to transfer expertise and good practices, as well as to obtain informal feedback for the transformation in the field of security.

On the *external dimension of security*, in response to NATO's conditions related to the existence of peaceful and good neighbourly relations, Romania has solved most of the challenges in this area, signing bilateral treaties that addressed some of the sensitive and pressing issues in bilateral dialogue (as in the case of relations with Ukraine), and advancing trilateral working formats to increase regional cooperation. The most relevant progress – and the one with the greatest impact for meeting the criteria to join NATO – concerned the relation to Budapest, where Romania moved from the tense situation which characterized the beginning of the 1990s (marked by internal disturbances, requests from Hungary, to forums such as the UN Commission for Human Rights, to monitor the situation of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania or the escalation of the bilateral problems up to the point where mutual assurances were needed, between the defence ministers of the two states, Ferenc Karpati and Victor A. Stănculescu, that the military reaction of either party is excluded<sup>15</sup>) to a normalization of relations and even an increase of cooperation (e.g., the creation, in 1998, of a mixed, Romanian-Hungarian military battalion<sup>16</sup> or raising bilateral relations, in 2002, to the rank of strategic partnership).

Except for the regional level, until the 1997 NATO Summit, important measures were taken to overcome the international isolation that had characterized the beginning of the transition to democracy. Multilaterally, Romania participated in all relevant security debates (such as the downsizing the conventional forces, the adhesion to the OSCE code of conduct on politico-military aspects of security), it

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<sup>12</sup> \*\*\*, *România – NATO. Carte albă (...)*, p. 109.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 118.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 109.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Cottey, *East-Central Europe after the Cold War: Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary in Search of Security*, Palgrave Macmillan, 1995, London & New York, pp. 106-108.

<sup>16</sup> Mihai Romulus Vădean, *Relațiile româno-ungare în contextul integrării în structurile europene și euroatlantice: 1989-2010*, Lumen, Iasi, 2011, p. 90.



became a member of the Council of Europe and, in addition to the development of its relations with NATO, it also opened the interactions to the European Union. Although they did not equate to direct advantages in relation with the Alliance, these processes nevertheless proved Romania's general interest in joining the Euro-Atlantic community, making Bucharest more credible internationally.

Bilaterally, Romania strengthened its relations with the United States, France, Germany, Italy, or the United Kingdom. Even since 1992-1993, military cooperation agreements have been signed with some of NATO member states, which included a diverse array of activities, ranging from the training of personnel in the Romanian security sector (courses, visits, exchanges of experience, language training), to research, military medicine or communication. Such an agreement, signed with Germany in 1994, comprised over 40 joint actions of the two states<sup>17</sup>, while the cooperation agreement with Turkey, signed in 1992, included the creation of a joint commission, with annual meetings, exchanges of information or mutual support for military equipment repair<sup>18</sup>. The interactions in these formats provided a consistent input to the understanding and the operationalization, by the Romanian side, of the norms, ways of working or standards already existing in NATO, a process which, on the one hand, facilitated interoperability with the Alliance and, on the other, stimulated the reform and the modernization of the Romanian security sector.

The most consistent progress was made in the dialogue with the United States, where the relationship went from a minimalist functioning (marked by episodes such as the delaying of granting, for Romania, of the most favoured nation clause), to the creation of a joint working group for political and military problems, the offering of financial support for the transformation of security (following the voting, within the US legislature, of documents such as the *NATO Participation Act* – 1994), or the launch, post-Madrid, with the visit of president Bill Clinton, of the Strategic partnership with Washington, which has become – and remained – one of the security pillars of Romania.

As for the *internal dimension of security*, the effects of the transformation process were related to the numerical downsizing of the military forces and their professionalization, the consolidation of the civilian leadership and of democratic control and oversight over the security sector, the reform of the defence organization model, the modernization of training and of the equipment, the implementation the

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<sup>17</sup> Mihail Ionescu, *România – NATO. Cronologie 1989 – 2004*, Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004, pp. 87-88.

<sup>18</sup> \*\*\*, *Acordul între Guvernul României și Guvernul Republicii Turcia privind cooperarea în domeniile instruirii, tehnicii și științei militare din 20.02.1992*, Romanian Government, Bucharest, February 20, 1992, URL: <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gyzteojz/acordul-intre-guvernul-romaniei-si-guvernul-republicii-turcia-privind-cooperarea-in-domeniile-instruirii-tehnicii-si-stiintei-militare-din-20021992?d=2019-10-31>, accessed on 01.11.2019.





Allied standards (from planning, to punctual processes, such as the procedure to load with fuel an aircraft) and the offering of the necessary guarantees on Romania's capacity to participate in the Allied activities (the availability of the financial resources, the possibility to delegate representatives to NATO, the capacity to ensure the security of the Allied information etc.).

In this area, the changes implemented before 1997 were related to the introduction of the civilian leadership of the Ministry of Defence and the demilitarization of several leadership positions in the institution, the organizational reform of the defence area (which included the transformation of the Defence Staff, strengthened the organization by categories of forces and decentralized the decision within<sup>19</sup>, the reduction by more than 700 positions of the diagram of the Ministry of Defence<sup>20</sup> and encompassed the abolition of one of the four armies of the ground troops or the creation of several peacekeeping battalions, prepared according to the Allied standards), the reform of the military education (focused on the implementation of the Western model of the officer within the Romanian Armed Forces, on the modernization the educational infrastructure and the introduction, among the subjects taught, of new areas, such as computer science), the initiation of the first contacts with some of the largest manufacturers of military equipment from NATO states, or the transformation, with Allied support, of the planning processes (e.g., the drafting, with American expertise, of the *Defence resources management study*)<sup>21</sup>. There were also launched efforts to update the normative framework (a new law on defence, a better definition of the status of the military personnel, the update of the legislation regarding the functioning of other institutions within the security sector) and to completely review the strategic documents in this area (a new military doctrine and the creation of the *Integrated Concept on National Security*, submitted to NATO in 1994, together with Romania's Partnership for Peace *Presentation Document* – papers remaining, however, blocked in Parliament). The non-participation with troops in activities abroad and the decline of the organization of military exercises on national territory, established after 1968, have been eliminated in order to facilitate the participation in Partnership for Peace missions and to be able to cooperate effectively with NATO. Other processes were aimed at preparing the political elite and the society to exert a real democratic control over the security sector, at strengthening the latter's democratic accountability or at supporting its transparency.

Despite the consistent progress, the NATO Summit in Madrid formalized the invitation to join the Alliance for only three states from Central and Eastern Europe, Romania remaining outside the security umbrella provided by NATO and continuing

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<sup>19</sup> \*\*\*, "Evoluția Statului Major al Apărării", *Ministry of National Defence*, Defence Staff, Bucharest, 2019, URL: <https://www.defense.ro/evolutie-smap>, accessed on 02.01.2020.

<sup>20</sup> \*\*\*, *România – NATO. Carte albă (...)*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 18-19.



to adapt to the Alliance's standards. Between the NATO Summit in Madrid and the one in Prague, from 2002, the main new tool in providing the benchmarks for the transformation of security and for monitoring the progress in this area was the *Membership Action Plan* (MAP), launched in 1999, in Washington. Its drafting represented, just as in the case of the Partnership for Peace, a way to postpone the invitation for new members, given that the Alliance was rather focused on the negative developments in the Balkans, while the effect of Poland's admission, or the Czech Republic and Hungary's admission was still under evaluation. The document encompassed five chapters, including the political and economic area, the legislative framework, resource-related issues, as well as issues linked to security and defence<sup>22</sup>.

Just as the previous mechanisms of interaction with NATO, MAP required that Bucharest achieve a concrete set of goals – in order to maximize the chances to join the Alliance –, as well as the channels for monitoring progress (e.g. visits of the Allied teams, aimed at assessing the achievement of the goals and the reform, followed by progress reports) and for assisting the transformation process (including a direct and permanent assistance, through external advisers, from NATO member states that cooperated with the Ministry of Defence).

Between Madrid and the moment of joining NATO, in 2004, the landmarks of the transformation of the external dimension of security were related to the consolidation of the regional profile and the proof of Romania's that the country was ready to contribute to NATO missions and to protect the security interests of the member states. In 1999, despite traditional positive relations with Serbia and against the public sympathy for the neighbouring country, Bucharest supported the NATO campaign in Kosovo, participating in improving the security situation in the Balkans. This endeavour continued an already existing Romanian presence in the region, which had begun in Bosnia, in 1996, respectively in Albania, in 1997. With the start of the global fight against terrorism, Bucharest has also committed itself to support the Allied actions in Afghanistan and those of the US-led coalition in Iraq, strengthening its external profile and bearing all costs (international – especially in the case of the 2003 intervention –, public, financial and especially human) arising from the support of Allied actions. Only in the aftermath of the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, Romania provided constant support with about 1500 soldiers<sup>23</sup> (for a fair understanding, in the assessment of the Ministry of Defence, the cost for sending to Afghanistan, for 6 months, an infantry battalion of 406 people amounted to \$ 28 million<sup>24</sup> at that time, excluding previous expenses related to their training

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<sup>22</sup> Ioan Mircea Pașcu, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

<sup>23</sup> Bogdan Chiriac, *România în NATO. De la Madrid la București*, Historia, Bucharest, 2008, p. 485.

<sup>24</sup> Ioan Mircea Pașcu, *op. cit.*, p. 269.



and equipment). In September 2001, by a vote of the Parliament, Romania also made available its airspace, as well as the other categories of facilities, to support the global fight against terrorism<sup>25</sup>.

Internally, the main changes were related to the numerical downsizing of the armed forces (with an initial target of 112,000 soldiers<sup>26</sup> set for 2004), the rebalancing of the military ranks (which required the retirement of numerous military personnel, including generals, an effort facilitated by lowering the retirement age<sup>27</sup>), the establishment of clear landmarks for the evolution in the military career (including through the drafting of the first Guide aimed at approaching this topic), better conditions and guarantees of protection of the Allied classified information (including through the standards imposed in the functioning of the National Registry Office for Classified Information, created in 2002), the drafting of new strategic documents (a new *Integrated concept on national security*, released in 1999, and the *Strategy on national security*, from 2001). The transformative impact of the dialogue with NATO has been doubled by changes emerging from the interaction with other international organizations, such as the demilitarization of certain components of activity (the Police, due to the interaction with the European Union and the implementation of the *acquis* related to the Justice and Home Affairs European pillar), or the consolidation of the external profile, related to the rotating presidency of the OSCE, ensured in 2001.

These processes, which relied upon the political consensus concerning the Euro-Atlantic integration of Romania and the wide public support for this objective, made a significant contribution to Romania's invitation to join NATO, in 2002, in Prague, and to the effective accession to the Alliance, in 2004. A decade and a half after the first contacts with NATO and ten years of structured dialogue around the Partnership for Peace, Romania gained full access to the security guarantees provided by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The constant efforts have been compensated by the benefits of membership, Romania attaining the most solid security guarantees in its history and the most durable security umbrella to shelter the development of all the components of the state.

### **3. Romania in NATO: Post-accession Developments and the Role within the Alliance, in 2020**

The moment of accession to NATO confirmed the progress made in the field of security, without being equivalent, however, for the Romanian state, neither

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<sup>25</sup> \*\*\*, "Cronologia relațiilor România – NATO", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, Bucharest, 2020, URL: <https://www.mae.ro/node/5346?page=3>, accessed on 10.03.2020.

<sup>26</sup> Ioan Mircea Pașcu, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 228.



with the completion of the processes of internal transformation, nor with a time of stagnation in the field of security. The post-accession period was followed by the accession of several years of economic growth, to the European Union, in 2007, as well as by a stronger dialogue with the main partners within the Euro-Atlantic community. Only in relations with the United States, Romania signed, in 2005, the *Agreement on the activities of the US forces stationed in Romania*, the two countries agreed, in 2011, the terms of setting up, on Romanian territory, some of the components of the American defence system against ballistic missiles, and it was launched the *Joint Declaration on the Strategic Partnership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, whose operationalization has been accompanied by the creation of a joint working group<sup>28</sup>.

Romania also continued to contribute to NATO missions and to support its Allies' security interests. In 2008 alone, Bucharest provided over 1,800 military personnel for operations abroad, especially in the Middle East and in the Balkans, which represented almost 4% of its forces<sup>29</sup>. Internally, Romania continued the effort to professionalize the armed forces, to downsize their number (with a target of 90,000 people, including 75,000 military<sup>30</sup>) and align their training to NATO standards. At the same time, the compulsory military training (for the civilian population) was eliminated in 2006 and the country completed new stages in equipping the armed forces compliant with the Allied standards. For a more coherent transformation of the military area, in 2007 the *Strategy for the transformation of the Romanian Army* was adopted, designed to be carried out in three stages and to remain active until 2025. The document pointed out that the transformation of the Romanian Army was designed *in correlation with the transformation of NATO*<sup>31</sup>, advancing 17 objectives of reform and modernization, ranging from logistics and human resources, to digitalization, military education, the optimization of the planning and evaluation system or the public communication activities<sup>32</sup>.

However, the post-accession period also encompassed numerous limits in the transformation process, related, internally, especially to the low budget granted for defence, and, externally, to the regional developments and the end of the constructive dialogue between the Alliance and the Russian Federation. 2008, which was, for Romania, the year of the NATO Summit in Bucharest, also brought the conflict in Georgia, which provided a strong signal on the limits accepted by Moscow

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<sup>28</sup> \*\*\*, "Parteneriatul strategic România – SUA", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, Bucharest, 2020, URL: <https://www.mae.ro/node/4944>, accessed on 07.03.2020.

<sup>29</sup> \*\*\*, "Romania's Contribution to Operations", *NATO*, Brussels, 2009, URL: <https://www.nato.int/issues/commitment/docs/090401-romania.pdf>, accessed on 07.03.2020.

<sup>30</sup> \*\*\*, *Strategia de transformare a Armatei României*, Ministry of National Defence, Bucharest, 2007, p. 16.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 13.



in the eastward expansion of the Euro-Atlantic community. In 2014, this signal was reconfirmed by tensions which also erupted in Ukraine, just a few hundred kilometres away from Romania's borders.

The window of constructive relations between the United States, their European partners and the Russian Federation, which had allowed, in the post-Cold War period, positive evolutions in terms of security – such as the agreement to downsize the conventional military capabilities and even NATO eastward enlargement –, was, thus, beginning to close. After 2008 and, especially, after 2014, the international relations theorists even described the new security relations as a new Cold War. Moreover, the events in Ukraine brought a shift in the paradigm of the military confrontations, through the officially not assumed character of certain actions and the doubling of the military conflict with unconventional areas of confrontation (e.g. the cyber space).

Following the events in Georgia and Ukraine, NATO has endeavoured to strengthen, on the one hand, the eastern flank and on the other, to respond to the new configuration of threats, transposed into a hybrid sphere. These developments were addressed by launching the Readiness Action Plan, at the 2014 Wales Summit, which covered, among others, the creation of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) aimed at strengthening reaction capabilities on the eastern flank. In Warsaw, in 2016, it was also decided to set up the Enhanced forward presence mechanism (for Poland and for the three Baltic states) and the Tailored forward presence (for the NATO states in the Black Sea area)<sup>33</sup>, in order to deter the aggressive actions against the Allies and to ensure the best capabilities to protect them, if necessary. Translating the idea of war into unconventional areas, related to the virtual space or to the dissemination of false information through the media, was addressed by including, in 2016, cyberspace under the protection of the Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. NATO also created a Cyberspace Operations Centre, in Mons, and established the support teams against hybrid attacks<sup>34</sup>.

Romania was an actively engaged party and a strong supporter of these processes. In 2014, Bucharest received the leading role in the NATO Fund aimed at supporting the cyber defence of Ukraine<sup>35</sup>. One year later, given the crisis in Ukraine, in order to ensure and strengthen its own security and to support the Allied one, Romania committed to gradually reach the threshold of 2% of GDP for defence, starting from an allocation of 1.4%<sup>36</sup>. Of this percentage, more than a third concerned the acquisition of military

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<sup>33</sup> Șerban Filip Cioculescu, “NATO la 70 de ani de existență: cât de necesar ar fi un nou concept strategic și cum ar trebui regândită descurajarea în actualul context internațional?”, in *Monitor Strategic*, No. 1-2, 2019, p. 12.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 12.

<sup>35</sup> \*\*\*, “Problematika securității cibernetice în cadrul organizațiilor internaționale și implicarea României ca membru al acestora”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, Bucharest, 2020, URL: <https://www.mae.ro/node/28369?page=2>, accessed on 11.03.2020.

<sup>36</sup> Vladimir Socor, “Pillar of NATO: Romania's Ambition in the Black Sea Region”, *The James-*





systems and equipment (exceeding by more than half NATO's recommendation for allocations on this component<sup>37</sup>). Also, from 2015, Romania hosts the Headquarters of the South-East Multinational Division (HQ MNS SE), which brought together, besides the Romanian representatives, personnel from the United States, Germany, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal or Poland<sup>38</sup> and whose main purpose is to coordinate the Allied Force Integration Units from Bulgaria and Romania and the South-East Multinational Brigade in Craiova<sup>39</sup>. Romania's profile in NATO and the Allied presence in the Black Sea area were, thus, strengthened and clearly outlined. As for the military missions abroad, Romania also continued to ensure a consistent presence, the Supreme Defence Council approving, in 2018, a Romanian presence abroad of about 3,000 military, police forces and gendarmes<sup>40</sup>.

In 2020, Romania will ensure a stable presence in the Pontic Basin, is an active contributor to the Allied forces in Poland, an actor constantly engaged in the Allied actions in the Balkans and in the global fight against terrorism, as well as a key point for the ballistic missile defence capabilities – elements which are also defined as its objectives within NATO –, while the modernization of the internal security sector is still on the agenda. Quoting a statement of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, Bucharest is currently participating in *Allied security in many ways, and in many different places. (...) Modern capabilities and contributions to our missions and operations make NATO stronger and Romania safer*<sup>41</sup>.

## Conclusions

In the three decades of relations, from partnership to membership, both the Alliance and the security situation of Romania undergone a continuous transformation process.

NATO has expanded eastwards, expanded the scope of the Article 5 and became a more flexible Alliance and better connected to the post-Cold War security

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*town Foundation*, Washington, 2018, URL: <https://www.google.com/search?q=the+jamestown+foundation&oq=the+jamestown+f&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j0i17.6440j1j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>, accessed on 07.03.2020.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>38</sup> \*\*\*, "HQ MND-SE celebrated 4 years since its establishment", *NATO - HQ MND-SE*, Bucharest, 2019, URL: <http://www.en.mndse.ro/articol/88/hq-mnd-se-celebrated-4-years-its-establishment>, accessed on 07.03.2020.

<sup>39</sup> \*\*\*, "Romania's Multi-National Brigade - Bolstering Nato's Tailored Forward Presence", *NATO - Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe*, Mons, 2018, URL: <https://shape.nato.int/news-archive/2018/romania-s-multinational-brigade-bolstering-natos-tailored-forward-presence->, accessed on 07.03.2020.

<sup>40</sup> Vladimir Socor, *op. cit.*

<sup>41</sup> \*\*\*, *Joint press conference with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis*, Bucharest, 2019, URL: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions\\_162945.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_162945.htm), accessed on 07.03.2019.



developments. At the same time, Romania's security situation has undergone, over the last 30 years, a complex transformative process. To highlight only a part of it, Bucharest made the transition from the membership to the Warsaw Treaty (and, later on, from a state without security guarantees) to joining NATO, from a relative isolation in foreign relations, to strong bilateral and multilateral relations, as well as from a sensitive regional dialogue, to openness and partnership.

Moreover, internally, the way of ensuring security has also changed. The institutional arrangement was reset, as follows: new institutions were established, the defence management and organization were reformed, the armed forces underwent professionalization and numerical reduction, the military training was reformed, it was introduced the civilian leadership of the security institutions, the mechanisms of democratic control became functional, it was created the framework for the transparency of this institutional sphere, the planning and evaluation systems were perfected and the equipment of the armed forces was modernized. These measures were aimed, on the one hand, at developing and modernizing the Romanian security sector in order to meet the post-Cold War challenges and the demands of democracy, and, on the other, at achieving NATO's interoperability requirements.

Romania's defence made the transition from a massive system, based on a conception of the war of the entire people and adjusted to traditional warfare, to a supple and professional force, adapted to cope with the security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Romania's traditional, strictly defensive position, which prohibited sending troops abroad or hosting military exercises, also became more flexible. The overall interaction with the Euro-Atlantic community also generated transformations related to other components of the security sector, such as the protection of classified information, the exchange of sensitive information with the representatives of other states or the modernization of the institutions responsible for these areas.

A core element for these changes and one of the most significant factors that contributed to their shaping was the relation with NATO. The changes were oriented (through documents such as the Membership Action Plan), assisted (through a continuous dialogue and transfer of expertise), evaluated and rewarded by the Alliance, by including Romania into NATO and by recognizing it as a security provider and a solid and reliable partner. Looking back at the 30 years of relations between Bucharest and the Alliance, almost all the parameters that characterized the national security in the aftermath of the communism removal had changed. In 2020, Romania benefits of some of the strongest security guarantees, is a stable international player and one of the main partners in the region, while the security sector has been modernized.

However, neither the Allied protection nor the current performance in ensuring security are permanent and relentless. In a constantly changing world – which, 30 years after the end of the Cold War, has proven multiple times that the end of history, proclaimed in the early 1990s, was, if not a myth, at least an overly optimistic





assessment of the global realities –, maintaining the cohesion of the transatlantic relationship, ensuring the contribution of Romania to the Allied objectives and the continuous updating of its security mechanisms, as it has already happened after 2008 and 2014, are pressing needs. Looking at the last decades, some of the most important lessons to be learned, for Romania, should be related, on the one hand, to the positive results of the consensus around the major security objectives, of the perseverance in their pursuit and of the readiness to involve a large effort for their achievement, and, on the other hand, to the necessity of continuous modernization and updating in the field of security.

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# THE “MOSAIC” WARFARE: A NEW AMERICAN STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE

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*Technological developments in recent decades, especially in the military field, have led to a major discrepancy in the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), especially because they have left behind doctrines and organisation of military structures for combat. The great innovations in robotics, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology and unmanned systems have gradually led to the replacement of regular fighters in modern battlespace and have reduced the number of military specialist in high-tech.*

*Creating cost-effective opportunities to overwhelm the adversary, along with the desire for multi-dimensional protection and reducing the loss of life, have become the basic goals of American military theorists and defense researchers. As a result, it has become imperative to develop a strategy that brings together “all puzzle elements” of advanced technologies and coordinates them on any potential adversary, in order to achieve a total and rapid victory. Called the Mosaic Warfare, the new US strategy presents the way in which the US currently combines various types of advanced platforms to achieve strategic surprise.*

*The new strategic approach also requires the development of new defense capabilities to be able to act in a system-of-systems network, such as C5ISR/C6ISR (command, control, communications, computers, cyber defense, combat systems, information, surveillance and research) and the future Smart Military Base. Therefore, this paper aims to present new concepts being introduced by the “Mosaic” Warfare, analysing the importance that the future typology of conflicts will have in the development of the main strategic documents of NATO member states, including Romania.*

**Keywords:** *Mosaic Warfare; C5ISR/C6ISR; Smart Military Base; Artificial Intelligence; Kill Web; OODA-loop.*

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## Introduction

As a result of the complex and unforeseen events that have taken place worldwide in the last decade and which have changed the way of thinking and conducting military conflicts, the United States has considered that it is time for a new strategy for the future military conflicts, a strategy of achieving complete victory in any type of warfare. Named the *Mosaic War*, this strategic approach is meant to take over the innovations and modernisations that appeared in Military Science and Art, made by the different military philosophies, starting with Sun Tzu. Indeed, many of the innovative ideas that characterise this new approach to the future warfare might be also found in Sun Tzu's "Art of War". But they were processed and adapted to the innovative tactics of the German's "Blitzkrieg", waged against the Allies in World War II, when an asymmetric advantage was obtained by using an overwhelming force of armor, motorised infantry, artillery and aviation, to create temporary breaches in the opponents' static defense that, in turn, was successfully exploited later.

Other military conceptual elements were taken from the "Assault-Breaker" strategy, being established as a compensation for the Vietnam disaster. Starting from the tank-aircraft binomial of German tactics, the second generation strategy developed a first strategic framework focused on the deployment of an initial system-of-systems capability, in which air sensors and missile systems worked together to overcome, as a military power, the huge Red Army counterpart, without reaching nuclear escalation.

A third generation of US military strategy included the concept of „Effect-Based Operations (EBO)”, which emerged from lessons learned in Afghanistan and Iraq. But the EBO concept has been adapted more to Military Operations other than War (MOOTW), leaving the conventional war to combine, ad-hoc, high-tech platforms and existing super-developed capabilities, with parts from already elaborated concepts and doctrines (developed for the use of each existing weapons platform), to which was also added the poor training of troops for the efficient use of those platforms. What has been preserved from EBO is represented by “nodes” and “effects”.

The 2014 Ukrainian crisis, as well as the tendency of the Russian Federation to regain its status of super power to control and maintain influence in its areas of strategic interest, combined with the increase of China's global economic and military power, forced Washington to think a new military strategy to counter all new risks and threats, including the possibility of a major conventional conflict with a nuclear regional power.

As a result, the Pentagon has moved on to developing and testing new concepts that respond to possible future threats, such as: “Operations on the



Coastline in a Contested Environment”, “Multi-Dimensional Operations” or “Multi-Dimensional Combat”. Among them was the new strategic approach suggested by scientific researchers from the US Governmental Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), called the *Mosaic Warfare*. The new strategy aims at bringing together individual combat platforms to build a common and comprehensive operational picture of a quick and decisive victory against any aggressor, as well as the development of an appropriate package of skills. The main goal of the new strategic framework, called the *Mosaic Warfare*, is to overrun the Russian strategy and Anti-Access/Aria Denial (A2/AD) systems that can prevent the US from intervening in the regions controlled by Moscow and Beijing.

### **1. The Mosaic Warfare’s Impact on Approaching Future Military Conflicts**

There is a theory amongst many military thinkers and scientific researchers in which the existence of many types of high-tech weapon systems (currently in use or being in different stages of production/testing), created to accomplish specific goals and objectives, is not enough to integrate into a joint, inter-agency and multinational picture of the modern battlespace. They could not produce a complete picture of that battlespace, but portions of it. According to this idea, some American scientific researchers started to consider the need to establish a conceptual framework in which “all pieces of a puzzle” to perfectly integrate, even if they changed their place and functions.

Moreover, the 2018 US National Defense Strategy stated that the US is currently capable of dealing with a nuclear or conventional threat from regional powers, such as Russia or China. But recent Pentagon war games have shown that American forces will never be able to successfully retaliate against a cumulative effect of the two states, united in a military Alliance/Strategic Partnership<sup>1</sup>.

The first scientific researcher who labelled the name of the new *Mosaic Warfare* strategy was the former DARPA Director, Mr. Thomas J. Burns and his deputy, Dan Patt, who acknowledged that current weapons systems were not built to address the complexity of modern battlespace to turn it into an asymmetrical advantage, in which the deployment of sense-decide-act systems, among the multitude of battle platforms in parallel warfare, waged on a broad front, should achieve a mass of fire and not of forces<sup>2</sup>. This goal could reduce human losses

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<sup>1</sup> David A. Deptula, Heather Penney, “Mosaic Warfare”, *Air Force Magazine*, November 2019, URL: <https://www.airforcemag.com/article/mosaic-warfare/>, accessed on 15.07.2020.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas J. Burns, “DARPA Tiles Together a Version of Mosaic Warfare”, a Power-Point presentation at *DARPA Military*, May 2018, URL: <https://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/darpa-tiles-together-a-division-of-mosaic-warfare>, accessed on 14.07.2020.





and increase the survival of US military forces, ultimately creating a System-of-Systems (SoS) for Joint forces' actions.

The massive use of unmanned and robotic systems instead of manned platforms is one of the characteristics of the new type of warfare. It is intended to increase the lethality and complexity that go beyond the efficiency of opponents' decision-making systems. Another feature, described by John Waterston, one of DARPA's program managers, is the commanders' ability to have a quick option to introduce new components into the SoS, to replace destroyed ones or to include new tactics that require different capabilities<sup>3</sup>.

Not of a less importance is the feature of consumability, which means the willingness to be replaced or sacrificed when the situation requires it. This feature draws attention to the principle of proportionality of the use of conventional forces. The systemic resilience is another important characteristic of the new strategic approach. Not only the establishment of kill chain effects, but also the systemic interconnection of all sensors, decision makers, forces and platforms that can lead to a combination of thousands of options available, forcing the opponent to analyse all existing options in a very short time and make a thorough decision accordingly. And it does not matter so much the opponent's reaction, as long as there are other options for using the Web kill.

As a result, the new strategy aims to bring at the level of ultra-tech weapon systems, the other two components of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) – organisation and doctrine/culture. Thus, strategic, operational and tactical commanders will have the option to inter-change and mix different armaments platforms in the *Mosaic Warfare*. In turn, the organisation for combat and operations planning will probably become multi and inter-disciplinary, being more focused on force protection in the multidimensional battlespace, which will require a more efficient use of different platforms and capabilities depending on the degree of accessibility and their superiority features.

Therefore, it is desirable to achieve a unified, technology-based strategy that incorporates the interface, communications networks and software for precise and synchronised navigation, allowing all sophisticated systems to act together in a multidimensional and cohesive battlespace (see Figure no. 1)<sup>4</sup>.

This new approach moves from Network-Centric Warfare to Decision-Centric Operations and combines the latter with the maneuverist approach (Maneuver Warfare) of platforms and forces to create multiple operational dilemmas for a

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> Stew Magnuson, "DARPA Pushes 'Mosaic Warfare' Concept", *National Defence Magazine*, November 2018, URL: <https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2018/11/16/darpa-pushes-mosaic-warfare-concept>, accessed on 16.07.2020.



**Figure no. 1:** The DARPA proposed model for Mosaic Warfare<sup>5</sup>

strong opponent at the regional level<sup>6</sup>. This approach will also avoid high costs and losses of own capabilities, of which those platforms with advanced technologies are quite expensive and not as numerous as any commander would like to have at war.

To be more realistic in the context of future military conflicts, in which frequent situational changes and uncertainty of available information will be more than inherent, the focused approach to operations on adverse decision-making systems increases the adaptability and survival of the US forces. These could be possible through maximising the use of military formations, organisation and reorganisation for combat of military units and large units, reduction of electronic emissions and pro-active actions against the adverse Command-Control, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C2ISR) systems. All those actions should increase the complexity and uncertainty through which the adversary perceives US military operations and destabilise its decision-making process. In short, the streamlining of the concept Mission Command that, although theoretically existing in the US doctrines and regulations, has never been put into practice. This is because, at the tactical level it is considered that young commanders do not have enough staff to support them in taking independent decisions regarding the efficient use of forces under their command, even during the lack of communications, which lead them to return to outdated tactics that are predictable in opponents' eyes.

In order to reduce some limitations of the mission control at the tactical level and allow US forces to conduct more distributed military operations,

<sup>5</sup> \*\*\*, "DARPA Tiles Together a Vision of Mosaic Warfare", *DARPA*, URL: <https://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/darpa-tiles-together-a-vision-of-mosaic-warfare>, accessed on 16.07.2020.

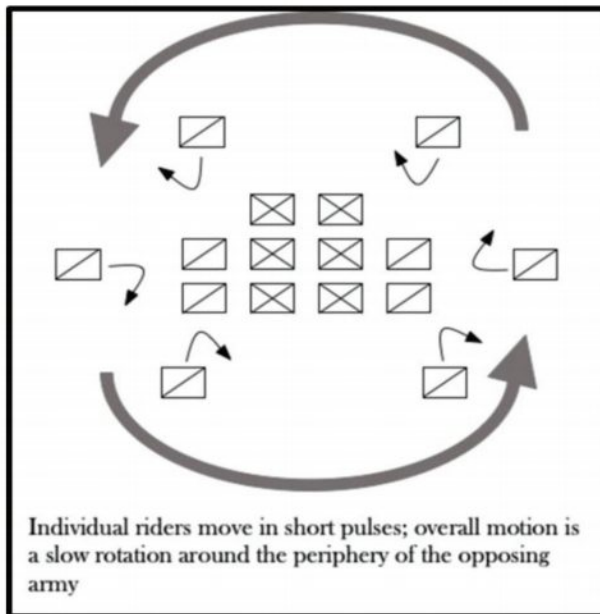
<sup>6</sup> Bryan Clark, Dan Patt, Harrison Schramm, "Mosaic Warfare. Exploiting artificial intelligence and autonomous systems to implement decision-centric operations", *Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments*, Washington D.C., 2020, p. 11.





scientific researchers have replaced military theorists and analysts and proposed the introduction of autonomous systems – including unmanned vehicles and communication network management –<sup>7</sup>, as well as the transition from command, control, communications, computer, information, surveillance and research (C4ISR) systems to command, control, communications, computer, cyber defense (element in addition to C4ISR), combat systems (element in addition to C5ISR), information, surveillance and research (C5ISR/C6ISR). The latter will be analysed in the next chapter to demonstrate its importance and the benefits it brings to the new strategic approach. Thus, it is created a structure that combines the human factor command with the Artificial Intelligence (AI) control – the human-machine binomial. The human factor will ensure flexibility and apply his/her creative ideas in the decision-making process, while AI will bring speed and proportionality in ensuring the ability of forces to cause multiple dilemmas to opponents. In short, commanders will review and evaluate the recommendations made by the AI systems control before submitting their orders, which will allow them to adjust and review their operations plans.

At the tactical level, this new type of warfare understands combat as a complex, emerging system that uses robotic mobile formations along with cyber and electronic



effects to overcome adverse forces. Achieving victory in missions carried out by tactical units and subunits requires a quick and creative combination of small, cheap and flexible unmanned systems with existing capabilities, thus providing a multitude of options leading to changing existing conditions and emerging vulnerabilities on the battlefield. Simply put, the use of a man-machine team that combines flexible unmanned systems with human intuition at a pace that an opponent cannot follow and counter. When forces attack simultaneously from multiple directions, they produce

**Figure no. 2:** Parthian Shot Tactic<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Sean Edwards, “Swarming and the Future of Warfare”, *RAND*, URL: [https://www.rand.org/pubs/rgs\\_dissertations/RG\\_SD189.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/rgs_dissertations/RG_SD189.html) accessed on 16.07.2020.



a series of dilemmas that can cause the adverse system to collapse (see Figure no. 2)<sup>9</sup>.

Adapting the organisation of forces to the new type of warfare, as well as the elaboration/revision of the doctrine/culture necessary for training both military decision-makers and planners, as well as the fighters, are the two elements of the RMA that must be considered in order to reach a real revolutionary thinking in the military field.

The organisation of the mosaic force design will have to address both challenges of the future operational environment and shortcomings of current strengths and capabilities<sup>10</sup>, to increase the power of information networks that, combined with advanced processing and disaggregated functionality, will restore America's military competitiveness in conflicts with similar military powers and increase their resilience. It is desired to move to smaller elements of the force structure, which can be reorganized or "rearranged" in the modern battlespace and which are trained and prepared to use multiple and various disaggregated platforms, achieving, thus, the destruction of an adverse system.

The capabilities of the future type of warfare will have to adapt the current decision-making process – observation, orientation, decision and action (OODA Loop) –, as well as to replace the introduction of all those functions in a single high-tech platform (such as F-35) in order to produce kill chain effects, with the establishment of a network of sensor nodes that can simultaneously collect, prioritize, process and exchange data and information, ensuring a continuous common operational picture. All functions are dispersed and distributed to a large number of manned or unmanned platforms that can exchange data and process functions in a constantly changing system (kill web) – see Figure no. 3.

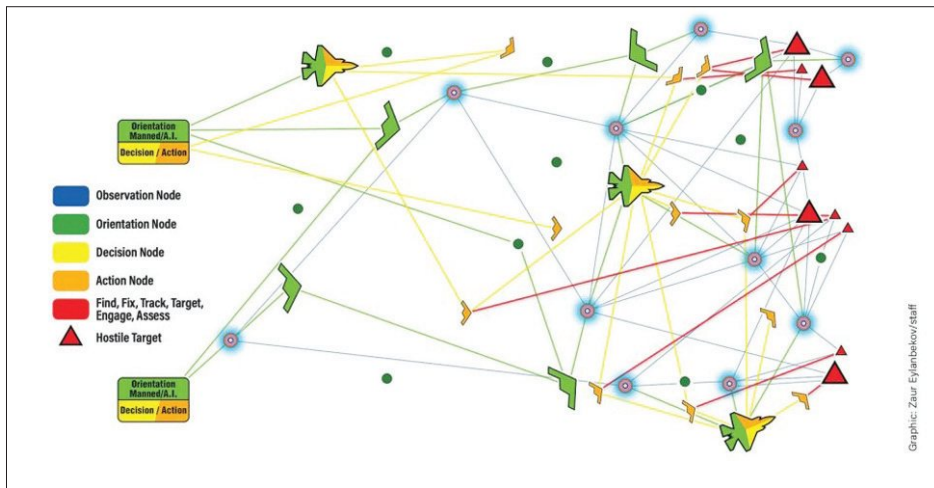
Thus, the necessary forces for the *Mosaic Warfare* are modular and flexible, highly interoperable and comprising dispersed functions from which can create networks of multiple and simultaneously effects against an emerging opponent target. The respective forces are characterized by the speed of reaction, the existence of several nodes and the maintenance of efficiency, even when they absorb information or their nodes are worn out.

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<sup>9</sup> Benjamin Jensen, John Paschkewitz, "Mosaic Warfare: Small and Scalable are Beautiful", *War on the Rocks*, December 2019, URL: <https://warontherocks.com/2019/12/mosaic-warfare-small-and-scalable-are-beautiful/>, accessed on 14.07.2020.

<sup>10</sup> A.N.: As per David A. Deptula and Heather Penney, "The problems of the current forces refer to: the small number of high-tech multifunctional platforms, which represents a vulnerability of the American operational architecture; the unchanged practice of acquiring different types of ultra-modern weapon systems, but in such a small number, which leads to the inefficiency of developing those capabilities and not securing the packages of forces needed for a major conflict; a slow process of development and operationalisation of major weapons systems; difficulties in balancing the use of the current package of forces in the whole range of military missions; current lack of key capabilities for forces to achieve usage and survivability, leading to the risk of inability to produce effects in future conflicts."

The revision of doctrinal concepts and the development of a military culture specific to the new type of warfare will take into account the change in the way of thinking of military theorists from the “artillery salvo exchange” approach of the war of attrition to that of increasing the power of the mosaic one, to maneuver and reach an advantageous position over the opponent. It is equivalent to using Mission Command, secured and accelerated by AI, to transform strategic military thinking specific to the “Industrial Age” with the education and training of fighters to act in the current “Information Age”, which envisages a future confrontation of systems.



**Figure no. 3:** The Mosaic Warfare’s “Kill Web”, as proposed by the Mitchell for Aerospace Studies<sup>11</sup>

To achieve a real Revolution in Military Affairs, the Pentagon will have to:

- maintain the current commitment to the development of approved capability packages, accelerating the acquisition of high-tech platforms (such as F-35 and B-21), developing and gradually introducing disaggregated elements;
- invest heavily in the development and operationalisation of those facilitators of the new type of warfare, especially in AI, which will bring new capabilities to the force structure (such as maneuver autonomy, decision making or network routing) and will change the way in which forces are used in combat;
- experiment with new concepts of the strategic approach – such as

<sup>11</sup> Lt Gen David Deptula, USAF (Ret.) and Heather Penney with Maj Gen Lawrence Stutzriem, USAF (Ret.) and Mark Gunzinger, “Restoring America’s Military Competitiveness: Mosaic Warfare”, *The Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies*, URL: <https://www.mitchellaerospacepower.org/oldpublications>, accessed on 14.07.2020.



C5ISR/C6ISR and the new Smart Military Base of the future – and include the results obtained in the operational and technical requirements of new technologies, in order to exploit any opportunity and achieve the most efficient way of using them;

- carry out a cost-benefit assessment of developing an alternative force structure to the current one, capable of discouraging or, if necessary, dominating in a high-tech systemic warfare, in which the principle of sufficient force and the art of efficient combination of capabilities can achieve that specific density of a military action that can defeat a great power adversary and maintains a discouraging role in other theaters of operations (ToO).

Thus, the US military will be able to use all means they have at their disposal, in an innovative way, to overwhelm opponents, create multiple dilemmas and getting involved in their decision-making processes. In order to do so, they have to understand and be trained to use the new operational concepts and emerging technologies of the *Mosaic Warfare*.

### 1. C5ISR/C6ISR Systems

The biggest fear of US military specialists in future conflicts is the fact that communications will be inefficient or even neutralized. This vulnerability will be followed by the commanders' loss of windows of opportunity to explore the advantages obtained, if the principle of autonomy is not respected and the use of autonomous elements in the *Mosaic Warfare* could not act independently, when they are no longer connected to the network.

It has been demonstrated since peacetime that the necessary operational and technical capability requirements to counter all current and future risks and threats do not correspond with the Pentagon's weapons acquisition programmes. Thus, the most acute problem for the military, according to General Hawk Carlisle, former commander of the US Strategic Air Command, is that it persists in building "one-way" platforms that do not have the same characteristics and cannot be interchanged in combat. This is the case with the latest multi-role air combat capabilities (F-22 Raptor and F-35 Joint Strike Fighter), built by the same corporation (Lockheed Martin) and which, unable to communicate through data and encrypted, triggered the so-called "Fusion Warfare"<sup>12</sup>.

As a result, there was a need to develop a system to coordinate the networking of all available capabilities and ensure the exchange of information, unitary collaboration and the integrated work of all joint human-machine elements.

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<sup>12</sup> Stew Magnuson, *art.cit.*



Command, control, communications, computer, cyber defense, combat systems, information, surveillance and reconnaissance systems (C5ISR/C6ISR) are highly efficient capabilities that can ensure that information is passed on to decision makers in a timely manner with minimal security measures (see Figure 4)<sup>13</sup>.

C5ISR/C6ISR systems represent, in fact, a system-of-systems (SoS) that ensures the interconnection of operations management (C5/C6) with the spectrum of intelligence (ISR) and it includes<sup>14</sup>:

- architectural configuration;
- integrated technical systems dislocated in space, on air, land and sea, consisting of the latest technological developments in computers, communications, software, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning – such as DragonFly, the most recent innovation in cloud-based processing platforms designed to use advanced mission-specific software –, the development and advanced integration of analytical processors and computing tools, intelligent system performance and power, optical capabilities, and smart computer vision capabilities, remote and autonomous controlled capabilities, cyber mission assurance capabilities, active and passive optical capabilities in 2D and 3D and RF, network recording and archiving „blockchain” technology, results dissemination platforms, printing and optimisation networking capabilities, physical protection systems – such as Surveillance and Situational Awareness that provides comprehensive operational image –, training and simulation capabilities;
- telecommunications services, data transmission, cyber security, systems configuration, systems and software current maintenance and repairs, testing and evaluation, reliability and safety, multidimensional physical and electromagnetic protection, sustainability, risk and quality management, forecasted logistical support, training and simulation;
- staff: command team, staff, technical and specialized staff, logistics staff, staff for multidimensional physical security;
- specific infrastructure.

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<sup>13</sup> \*\*\*, “C6ISR: Our SETA Solutions”, *Goldbelt C6 R&D Institute*, January 2020, URL: <https://www.goldbeltc6.com/what-we-do/scientific-engineering-and-technical-assistance/c6isr-2/>, accessed on 17.07.2020.

<sup>14</sup> As per the *STS International Inc.*, remarks regarding the solution proposed by C6ISR, URL: <https://www.stsint.com/domains/c6ist/>, accessed on 17.07.2020.

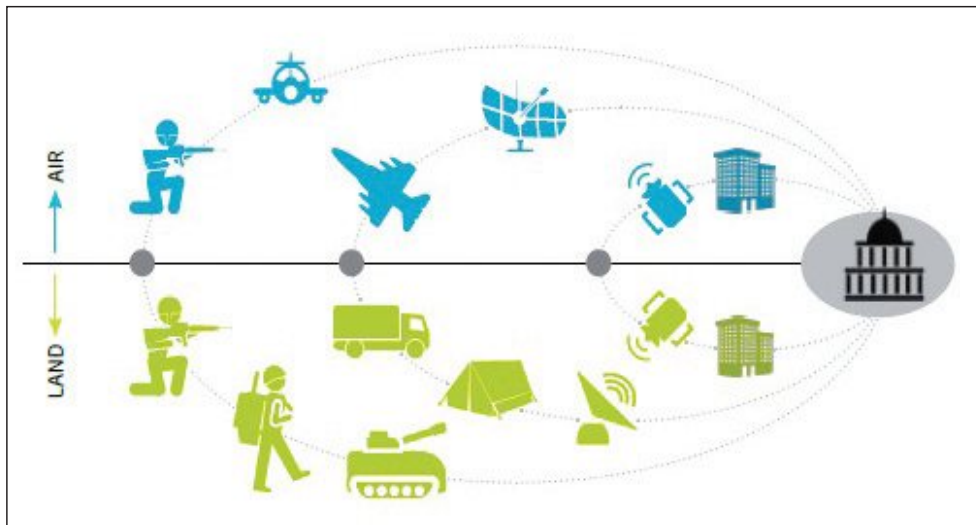


Figure no. 4: Latest technologies' integrated connection<sup>15</sup>

The capabilities considered to be strictly necessary to develop such systems are in the personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics, civil, CIS and cybernetic and include<sup>16</sup>:

- personnel – organisational management, personnel management and training;
- intelligence – target management, analysis of the operating environment, opponents analysis, establishment of probable opponents' Courses of Action (COAs);
- operations – organisation for battle (ORBAT), task organisation (TASKORG), planning, evaluation and monitoring;
- logistics – dashboard/performance chart for balanced logistics, transport planning, medical support management;
- civil – management of strategic informational planning, planning, monitoring and evaluation of CIMIC operations;
- CIS - monitoring and administration, information dissemination, systems preparation, communications management and monitoring, security;
- cybernetics – knowledge of the situation, information security solutions.

The characteristics that C5ISR/C6ISR systems should meet are: a modular, incremental and flexible design; integration with existing systems; adapted to existing communication networks to collect information and disseminate orders; flexible management of different types of environments against hostile ones;

<sup>15</sup> \*\*\*, "Latest technologies' integrated connection", URL: [infodefense@indacompany.com](mailto:infodefense@indacompany.com)

<sup>16</sup> \*\*\*, "C5ISR", *Indra Company*, Madrid, 2020, p. 2.





interoperability of information systems; force-oriented architecture, but with independent platforms; real-time control of ISR resources; the security of a solid and robust reliability, dispersed systems that can operate in different geographical areas; ensuring a different hierarchy for different information needs<sup>17</sup>.

In order to meet the minimum operational and technical requirements of the C5ISR/C6ISR system, the US Department for Defence (DoD) inaugurated, in 2019, the US Army Combat Capabilities Development Command C5ISR Center (CCDC C5ISR), with the mission to develop and integrate C5ISR technologies that ensure information supremacy and decisive lethality for the “Network Fighter” program. The specialised domains in which this center performs are: command, energy and integration, information and computer warfare, night vision and electronic sensors, space and ground communications<sup>18</sup>.

Some of this center’s exceptional achievements, meant to innovate the skills and available means for the fighter on the battlefield, are: night vision goggles; satellite technology that ensures the recognition of own and opposing targets; advanced wireless audio and video technology; air systems, such as AIRDEF (air defense), AMPS (Automated Mission Planning) and COAAS (AD Artillery Operations Center); ground systems such as BMS (Battlefield Management) and SIMGE (Strategic Military Management); naval systems, such as SMCOA (Command and Control of Amphibious Operations) and iMARE (Command and Control of Coastal Areas); joint systems, such as iDEBRIEFING (After-Action Report), MDLP (Multi-Data Link Processor) and iJOINT (Joint Command and Control). One of the lessons learned during these achievements is the lack/reduced number of specialised personnel in key areas within a future C5ISR/C6ISR system, such as: system engineers, computer researchers, electronic engineers, specialists in intelligence operations, IT and telecommunications specialists<sup>19</sup>.

Using flexible, open, modular architectures specific to each service, C5ISR/C6ISR systems integrate archived and real-time data and information to provide accurate and time-efficient intelligence products for the entire operational chain of command, in order to ensure the Situational Awareness in the modern battlespace for all staff participating in the operation. The functions provided by the C5ISR/C6ISR systems include: data fusion; multi-intelligence integration, situational awareness, modern operational space management, command and control, support for SIGINT processing, large-scale intel systems<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> \*\*\*, “CCDC C5ISR Center”, *US Army Combat Capabilities Development Command*, February 2019, URL: [https://www.army.mil/article/157832/ccdc\\_c5isr\\_center](https://www.army.mil/article/157832/ccdc_c5isr_center), accessed on 18.07.2020.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>20</sup> \*\*\*, “C5ISR Solution Areas”, *ManTech Corp.*, April 2018, URL: <https://www.mantech.com/capabilities/c5isr>, accessed on 18.07.2020.





Of great importance in the new architecture of C5ISR/C6ISR systems is the stationed and multidimensional protection of installations in air, land, naval or space facilities. These facilities, in order to meet the futuristic requirements of the Mosaic Warfare, will have to meet all the conditions of Smart Military Bases of the future. This is vital especially for those installations intended to be stationed outside national territory.

## 2. The Smart Military Base of the Future

As part of the new Mosaic Warfare Strategy, US military theorists have noted that the role of military bases and how the United States will project its power in strategic areas of interest will change in the future from the old approach to preparing the battlefield for military action, which ask for threat protection and help defending critical areas. Even if military bases are considered to be part of the multidimensional battlespace, new functions have recently emerged for them, such as mobile logistic support, air resupply, multidimensional protection, cyber defence or repair of military equipment before going into combat. These new functions require, in turn, a large volume of data and information to be stored and available at all time in one place.

As a result, in 2018, the Pentagon launched an initiative regarding the military bases of the future. The model for smart cities, especially the provision of specific online services and advanced digital platforms, also seems to be adapting to future Smart Military Bases. They will need advanced analytical data systems, artificial intelligence and robotics to increase their readiness and ensure the multidimensional protection of forces, to be efficient and effective in supporting emerging missions. Even Smart Military Bases located far from the front line will have to meet the same criteria, such as: security, resilience, protection of installations against any disruption, optimisation of services and increasing the efficiency of installations<sup>21</sup>.

Basically, a Smart Military Base represents the integration of technological innovations and processes that can improve the performance, efficiency and accomodation of goods and services managed on a military facility<sup>22</sup>. In other words, although there are bases that have used smart technologies and practices for energy initiatives, mobility and construction, a Smart Military Base integrates all these features, along with many others, to provide a comprehensive set of solutions

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<sup>21</sup> Rod Erickson, “Smart Military Bases – Resiliency with GIS”, *GISinc*, April 2020, URL: <https://www.gisinc.com/blog/smart-military-bases-resiliency-with-gis>, accessed on 17.07.2020.

<sup>22</sup> George Martinidis, “Smart Cities provide the model for Smart Military Bases”, *Urenio Org*, February 2017, URL: <https://www.urenio.org/2017/02/22/smart-cities-provide-model-smart-military-bases/>, accessed on 17.07.2020.



to the challenges associated with operating facilities<sup>23</sup>. These many other features include the existence of a sensor framework, a large data storage capacity, intel systems, as well as a protected but visible location.



Figure no. 5: The Smart Military Base for the Future Projected by Honeywell Aerospace<sup>24</sup>

As part of Pentagon's initiative, some military bases in the United States have so far succeeded in introducing new technologies, such as: communications with 5G and NextG technology (to support aircraft flights on missions, base and perimeter security and increasing pilot training), installation and integration of a network of sensors (for intelligent perimeter security, access gate monitoring, warning, aircraft fleet management and increased security), testing of autonomous vehicles and sensors (to reduce transport costs, ensure faster basic services and increasing public safety).<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Erv Lessel, Bill Beyer, Ted Johnson, *Byting the bullet, Now is the time for smart military bases*, Deloitte Center for government insights, URL: <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/public-sector/us-fed-byting-the-bullet.pdf>, accessed on 17.07.2020.

<sup>24</sup> Harry Lye, "Connectivity and the military base of the future", *Army Technology*, URL: <https://www.army-technology.com/features/connectivity-and-the-military-base-of-the-future/>, accessed on 17.07.2020.



The Smart Military Bases of the future, considered true ecosystems, will encompass, as can be seen in Figure no. 5, advanced technological systems with their equipment to defend against new threats. Thus, the acquisition and introduction of advanced software for digital warehouses or the management and tracking of assets will make these bases more resilient and cheaper to manage, especially if the aim is to upgrade existing ones and not build new facilities<sup>25</sup>.

The real issues to be addressed and solved by the future Smart Military Base include: public safety, possible natural or man-made disasters, an exponential increase in housing, transportation and other services, aging facilities, challenges of viable connectivity, pollution, access to permissive and reliable mobility, increasing energy consumption demands – while the energy is so limited –, cyber security risks of infrastructure<sup>26</sup>.

Building smart military expeditionary bases in volatile Theaters of Operations (ToO) is the biggest challenge for the military in all NATO member states. The special characteristics that a conflict area can have – such as a hostile environment in terms of local population and the existence of an adversary, dangerous weather and climate conditions, land difficult to access, limited resources, reduced or non-existent Host Nation Support (HNS) – and where the North Atlantic Council (NAC) decides to intervene militarily, forced the Alliance to launch a new concept of “Expeditionary Staging”, which it forwarded to a Dutch research and development Consortium of companies for implementation<sup>27</sup>. The testing phase will take place at the new established Fieldlab Smart Base Laboratory in Soesterberg. The prototype developed by this consortium, called “The Shaded Dome”, provides protection against severe weather conditions, low electricity consumption and is easy to lift and dismantle, measuring between 500 and 24,000 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>28</sup>

The Smart Military Bases of the future will house both the C5ISR/C6ISR systems and all the manned or unmanned elements of the Mosaic Warfare’s “Kill Web” and will have to be modular and flexible to accommodate all types of tasks and functions, including medical or disaster support.

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<sup>25</sup> Harry Lye, “Connectivity and the military base of the future”, *Army Technology*, June 2020, URL: <https://www.army-technology.com/features/connectivity-and-the-military-base-of-the-future/>, accessed on 18.07.2020.

<sup>26</sup> \*\*\*, “Smart Base Technologies: Building the Military Base of the Future”, *US Ignite*, October 2019, URL: [https://www.us-ignite.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Smart-Bases-Technologies\\_2-pager.pdf](https://www.us-ignite.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Smart-Bases-Technologies_2-pager.pdf), accessed on 18.07.2020.

<sup>27</sup> A.N.: This Dutch majority consortium includes Royal HaskoningDHV, Zwarts & Jansma Architects, Poly-Ned Textielarchitectuur and is supported by TNO Defence and Security (D&V).

<sup>28</sup> Philip van Dngen, “The military base of the future”, *TNO Defence and Security*, July 2017, URL: <https://www.tno.nl/en/tno-insights/articles/the-military-base-of-the-future/>, accessed on 19.07.2020.



## Conclusions

The *Mosaic Warfare* is often confused with similar concepts, such as “System-of-Systems” or “Multi-Domain Joint Operations”. Whatever the selected name, military theorists and Pentagon leaders see it as the future.

The task organisation of forces and systems according to the specifics of the mission to be accomplished is not something new, as is the idea of using systems networks in conflict. What is truly new about *Mosaic Warfare* is the speed and complexity with which it can combine the package of available flexible forces with the reinforced Command-Control system with emerging technology, operations divided into action elements and Mission Command, in order to achieve a real framework of a future modern Maneuver Warfare, focused on information. The main goal is not to allow the opponent the necessary time to predict and understand what is going to happen. At the Pentagon, the aim is to create a SoS different from the “puzzle game” (in which the pieces can be combined if they intertwine, only), which can be flexibly networked and quickly configured to ensure the ability to resilience of operators. That means the use of any system or unit that has those characteristic functions which allow them to combine with other elements to achieve a desired joint capability at the time and place chosen by commanders. As the distinguished counselor Robert O. Work stated, *The Army that will find the most appropriate combination of technology and operational concepts will probably be at the top.*

The implementation of the new technologies will decisively contribute to the *Mosaic Warfare* approach, being focused on obtaining a decisional advantage over an opponent. Support for decision-making by AI platforms, unmanned and autonomous systems, enhanced passive sensors, smaller weapons, and electronic and cyber warfare capabilities could impose complexity and confusion on an opponent and allow for attacks on key targets. Thus, the emergence of a possible strategic paradigm on the preparation and conduct of future operations will be focused on the decision.

So far, neither NATO nor Romania have moved to such approach in the recently conducted Strategic Defense Review (SDR). Concerns about the use of advanced technologies and the development of Smart Military Bases are found in the scientific events of NATO and some developed Member States, at an early stage. Unfortunately, this will further deepen the technological gap between the US and the European side of the Alliance.



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# POLITICAL-MILITARY LEADERSHIP AND MILITARY COMMAND IN THE WARSAW TREATY ORGANISATION

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*The present article tackles the issue of political-military leadership and military command within the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO). In this regard, starting from the main aspects included in the founding treaties of the two political-military organisations that dominated the international scene during the Cold War – NATO and WTO, some similarities and differences between the two organisations are presented. Moreover, the two statutes – in peace and in war time, which formalised the main command and control bodies in the WTO, are discussed with reference to the context in which the need for their development and adoption arose. Last but not least, the position adopted by Romania, as a WTO member state, in relation to the command and control mechanisms is reviewed, a position appreciated by researchers in the field as an important contribution to the WTO becoming a modern, mature and multilateral organisation.*

**Keywords:** *Cold War; NATO; WTO; command and control; Unified Armed Forces; standardisation; interoperability.*

## Introduction

In the geopolitical and geostrategic context subsequent to the end of the Second World War, also named Iron Curtain, Cold War or bipolar world, with reference to the two existing poles of power – the United States of America and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics – two political-military organisations were established,

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namely the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO), which dominated the world arena for more than 50 years. NATO was established on 4 April 1949, having as founding signatories Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Subsequently, to them there were added Greece and Turkey (1952), the Federal Republic of Germany (1955), Spain (1982), and after the end of the Cold War, Czechia, Hungary and Poland (1999), Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (2004), Albania and Croatia (2009), Montenegro (2017), North Macedonia (2020). WTO was established on 14 May 1955, the founding states being the USSR, Poland, the Democratic Republic of Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Albania. Both organisations, through the founding treaties, reaffirmed their faith in the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to settle any possible dispute by peaceful means, in compliance with the mentioned principles. The WTO was officially dissolved, following the Summit in Prague, on 1 July 1991.

### **1. NATO and WTO – Brief Comparative Analysis**

The founding treaties of the two organisations, signed in Washington<sup>1</sup>, in the case of NATO, and in Warsaw<sup>2</sup>, in the case of WTO, comprise 14 and 11 articles, respectively. Analysing the texts of the two treaties, it can be noticed that both political-military organisations were established in compliance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in support of international peace and cooperation, having approximately similar provisions and rhetoric, and invoking the same principles of international law – sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs. The differences reside in the fact that, although the expression is somewhat vague, in general, in the preamble of the treaty signed in Warsaw, they mentioned the specific elements leading to the decision of concluding it, namely the Western European Union, the remilitarisation of Western Germany and its eventual inclusion to NATO, a closing remark being that, in the event of establishing a collective European security system, ratified by a treaty, the WTO would dissolve. In addition, it was stated the desire to eliminate nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction, but no mention was made related

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<sup>1</sup> A.N.: The integral text of the *North Atlantic Treaty*, signed on 4 April 1949, is available at URL: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm), accessed on 20.03.2020.

<sup>2</sup> A.N.: The integral text of the *Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance*, signed on 14 May 1955, in Warsaw, is available at URL: [https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/treaty\\_of\\_friendship\\_cooperation\\_and\\_mutual\\_assistance\\_warsaw\\_14\\_may\\_1955-en-b1234dbc-f53b-4505-9d86-277-e4f5c20d4.html](https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/treaty_of_friendship_cooperation_and_mutual_assistance_warsaw_14_may_1955-en-b1234dbc-f53b-4505-9d86-277-e4f5c20d4.html), accessed on 21.03.2020.



to encouraging economic cooperation and welfare or to safeguarding the common heritage and civilisation, as it was in the case of the Washington Treaty. The question regarding the reasons and the utility of the WTO establishment, considering the USSR had already concluded bilateral treaties with all its satellites, six years after NATO's establishment and one day before the signing of the Austrian State Treaty, thus following a process somewhat unnatural compared to the usual one of alliance formation, has been provided many answers, related to the ideas of control, legitimacy, troops access to Western Europe, and even redundancy, taking into account the system of bilateral treaties. Relatively recent, with the development of the two international projects on the analysed period – *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP)*<sup>3</sup> and *Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (PHP)*<sup>4</sup>, which have gathered, as part of a considerable and remarkable effort, researchers, historians, archivists and translators, especially from the countries that used to be parties to the Soviet bloc, the mentioned question was answered from a soft power perspective, namely the prevalence of the *correlation of forces*, a hypothetical theoretic system considering attributes of power other than strictly military ones. An argument for the prevalence of the political goal of the WTO is also the fact that the planning of its establishment was entrusted to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs and not to the General Staff<sup>5</sup>. Last but not least, the provision of the Warsaw Treaty on its termination once a collective security system was established in Europe is interesting, in the context of the phrase used by NATO officials who referred to the WTO as a *cardboard castle*<sup>6</sup>. The label can be correlated with both the WTO irrelevance<sup>7</sup> for NATO and the fact that the successful establishment, based on a treaty, of a collective security system in Europe would have led to the WTO dissolution, piece by piece, in return for corresponding segments of NATO, the USSR remaining the dominant power in Europe and the arbiter of its security, based on the network of already concluded security bilateral

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<sup>3</sup> A.N.: Declassified documents, especially from the CIA Archives, related to the Cold War period, are available at URL: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/program/cold-war-international-history-project>, accessed on 28.05. 2020.

<sup>4</sup> A.N.: Declassified documents from the Cold War period, especially from the archives in former WTO states, URL: <http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/lory1.ethz.ch/index.html>, accessed on 28.05.2020.

<sup>5</sup> Vojtech Mastny, Malcolm Byrne (Editors), *A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991*, Parallel History Project, CEU Press, Budapest - Hungary, New York - USA, 2005, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Spencer, "Alliance Perceptions of the Soviet Threat, 1950-1988", in Carl Christoph Schweitzer (Editor), *The Changing Western Analysis of the Soviet Threat*, Pinter, London, 1990, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> A.N.: At the time the WTO was established, the organisation was considered an insubstantial copy of NATO, its main goal being perceived to represent a supplementary Soviet instrument for the control of its satellites in the Eastern Bloc, somewhat duplicating the bilateral treaties the USSR had already concluded with each of them.



treaties<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, there are also other reasons why the perception of the *cardboard castle* label, considering it would refer to the WTO redundancy, should be revised. Thus, NATO was considered a multilateral alliance from its inception, the decision-making process being based on the mechanism of consultation between partners, while WTO was perceived as the Soviet Union *transmission belt*<sup>9</sup> or the *most important organisation for perpetuating Soviet influence in Eastern Europe*<sup>10</sup>, perception that is still present among many historians, the WTO being considered a Soviet instrument for the total subordination of Eastern European governments, in post-Stalin era, evolving, over time, to a multilateral organisation. However, the importance of the military component of the organisation cannot be denied, especially in the period when it matured and reached its peak, namely between 1970 and 1980. In this regard, on the very day the founding treaty was signed, in Warsaw, it was decided the establishment of the WTO Armed Forces Unified Command, next to the Political Consultative Committee (PCC).

With regard to the main institutional mechanisms as well as command and control bodies of the two political-military organisations, the already mentioned Political Consultative Committee, consisting of the general secretaries of the communist parties, prime ministers, foreign ministers and/or defence ministers of the member states, was to coordinate the entire, not strictly military, activity, being the main political body of the WTO. It corresponded, to some extent, to the North Atlantic Council, the WTO not having an equivalent to the Council of Permanent Representatives, composed of representatives of NATO member states governments. In January 1956, at the Prague meeting, it was decided to establish two auxiliary bodies, the Permanent Commission and the Joint Secretariat. The Secretary General was one of the Soviet deputy foreign ministers, the ministerial responsibilities prevailing. By comparison, NATO Secretary General, who also chairs the North Atlantic Council, is a diplomat from an Alliance member state. With regard to the political consultation mechanism, the mentioned Permanent Commission was responsible for making recommendations on foreign policy matters, although the foreign ministers of the member states held regular meetings once or twice a year. In NATO, ensuring political consultation is the main function of the North Atlantic Council, assisted by the Political Committee, the meetings being held approximately on a weekly basis.

As for the military component, Article 5 of the founding treaty stipulated the

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<sup>8</sup> Vojtech Mastny, Malcolm Byrne (editors), *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> R.W. Clawson and L.S. Kaplan (Editors), "The Warsaw Pact. Political Purpose and Military Means", Ohio, 1982, p. X, in Laurien Crump, *The Warsaw Pact Reconsidered. International Relations in Eastern Europe, 1955-69*, Routledge, London and New York, 2015, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> C.D. Jones, "Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe. Political Autonomy and the Warsaw Pact", New York, 1981, p. IX, in Laurien Crump, *op. cit.*, p. 2.



establishment of a WTO Armed Forces Unified Command. The Soviet Commander-in-Chief of the Unified Armed Forces (UAF) had as deputies the defence ministers of the member countries. Moreover, the Chief of the Soviet Air Defence was in charge of the air defence of the WTO member countries. In March 1969, it was established the Committee of WTO Defence Ministers. By comparison, NATO military authority, the Military Committee, composed of the Chiefs of Staff of the member countries and their representatives, is subordinated to the political authority, the North Atlantic Council. The Chairman of the Military Committee, having any nationality of the member countries, is elected by the Chiefs of Staff for a limited period, for two or three years. NATO Military Committee was established a few months after the establishment of the organisation, being the link between the political and military components of the Alliance. Thus, NATO Supreme Allied Commanders, Strategic Commanders, receive, from the Military Committee, consensus-based guidance<sup>11</sup>. In this context, mention should be made that, when NATO was established, there was no command structure responsible for the defence of Western Europe, as it was stipulated in Article 5. There were only regional planning groups, having the task of drawing up plans for the defence of their areas. Following the outbreak of the Korean War, in 1950, NATO member nations decided to enhance their defence efforts and initiated the process of developing an integrated military command structure, having a sole European Supreme Allied Commander (SACEUR). The first of them was US General Dwight D. Eisenhower. The Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) was established, on 2 April 1951, in Rocquencourt, France, being relocated, in 1967, following France's withdrawal from NATO command structures, in Casteau, Mons, Belgium. As commander (SACEUR), D. Eisenhower emphasised that his staff represented all service and member nations, literally stating *Here we know ourselves as a single entity in carrying out the objectives of NATO and in building a strong defence for the purpose of preserving the peace. Actually, for the purpose of this operation: we shall set aside our individual nationalities*<sup>12</sup>.

As far as the WTO was concerned, the process of establishing an integrated command structure was not similar to the one in NATO, primarily because most WTO member states did not perceive the alliance as natural, especially in terms of its supranational character, in the well-known context of their situation at the

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<sup>11</sup> A.N.: For further details, see: \*\*\*, *A Short History of NATO*, URL: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/nato-hq/declassified\\_139339.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/nato-hq/declassified_139339.htm), accessed on 25.03.2020; \*\*\*, *The Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Pact, A Comparative Study*, NATO Information Service 1110 – Brussels, URL: [http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/1/3/137592/0224\\_The\\_Atlantic\\_Alliance\\_and\\_the\\_Warsaw\\_Pact-A\\_Comparative\\_Study\\_1971\\_ENG.pdf](http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/1/3/137592/0224_The_Atlantic_Alliance_and_the_Warsaw_Pact-A_Comparative_Study_1971_ENG.pdf), accessed on 25.03.2020.

<sup>12</sup> \*\*\*, “SHAPE in France”, *SHAPE*, URL: <https://shape.nato.int/page134353332.aspx>, accessed on 04.04.2020.



end of the Second World War and of their specificity, an important feature being represented by a strong presence of the national element, which contradicted the internationalism promoted by Marxist-Leninist ideology. As a result, the USSR made efforts to prove the legitimacy of adopting such a position and to achieve the framework in which the two directions, nationalist and internationalist, could coexist. That was the reason why it was necessary to formalise, through additional documents, the establishment of command and control bodies, as well as their responsibilities. In general, those documents took the form of statutes, namely a set of provisions, of an official nature, regulating the purpose, structure and functioning of an organisation.

## **2. The Unified Command of the WTO Armed Forces – 1955**

Under the mentioned circumstances, although the existence of the WTO Armed Forces Unified Command was specified in Article 5 of the WTO Treaty, the document related to its structure and areas of responsibility was developed approximately three months after the establishment of the organisation, namely on 7 September 1955.

The Statute of the WTO Armed Forces Unified Command, in 1955, consisted of five parts related to the Supreme Commander, the deputies of the Supreme Commander, the Staff of the Unified Armed Forces, the relationships between the mentioned Staff and the General Staffs of the WTO member states, and the lines of communication. Thus, among the responsibilities of the Supreme Commander, there can be mentioned to carry out the PCC resolutions, which dealt directly with the UAF, to supervise the operational and combat preparation of the UAF, to organise unified exercises of troops, fleets and staff under the UAF command, to thoroughly know the condition of troops and fleets, to adopt, in cooperation with the member states governments and defence ministries, the necessary measures in order to ensure the permanent combat readiness of the forces. Moreover, he had the right to evaluate the UAF strategic and combat readiness, as well as to formulate, based on the evaluation results, orders and recommendations to correct possible deficiencies. His deputies were fully responsible for the troops mobilisation and readiness, as well as for their operational, combat and political training. Moreover, they were responsible for ensuring the necessary personnel, armament and technical equipment, having to report the situation of mobilisation and combat capability, as well as the state of the political, strategic and combat training of the troops and fleets under the Unified Command. As for the Staff of the UAF, the Chief of Staff had to supervise the activity of the personnel subordinated to the Supreme Commander of the UAF. The Staff consisted of the permanent representatives of the General Staffs from the WTO member states, special bodies responsible for strategic,





tactical and organisational issues, and inspectors of the armed forces services. Among the responsibilities, there can be mentioned to comprehensively know the state and conditions of the troops and fleets, to adopt, in cooperation with the General Staffs from the WTO member states, the necessary measures to ensure the permanent combat readiness of troops, to develop the plans for the qualitative and quantitative optimisation of troops, to evaluate the necessary technical equipment and troops. The Chief of Staff had the right to discuss with the deputies in the WTO member states to get informed in relation to the state and conditions of the troops and fleets under the UAF command. There were also stipulated the cooperation relations between the General Staff of the UAF and the General Staffs from the WTO member states, which had the obligation to inform the General Staff of the UAF on the troops composition as well as their military and political training, and to coordinate the deployment of the troops and fleets under command. The lines of communication were represented by the diplomatic bags as well as by the other means provided by the member states for their communication with the deputies to the Supreme Commander and the Chiefs of the General Staff from the WTO states<sup>13</sup>.

### 3. WTO Reorganisation – Statues of the New Institutions – 1969

Approximately one year after the adoption of the presented document, on 30 October 1956, in Moscow, the *Declaration by Soviet Government on the Principles of Development and Further Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and Other Socialist States* was issued, stipulating the five principles governing the relations between the most powerful state of the alliance and its satellites, namely: full equality, mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity, independence, sovereignty, and mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs<sup>14</sup>. In this context, marked by the literal interpretation of the idea of following different paths to socialism, promoted by Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, certain internal crises the WTO had to address in the decade to follow should be mentioned. The best known were the episodes in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Thus, in June 1956, a workers' revolt, which started in Poznan, took place in Poland. The repression of the revolt resulted in casualties – dead, wounded, arrested. Moreover, in the existing internal and external context, the revolt turned into a political crisis, representing a challenge to the ability of Soviet leadership to control the

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<sup>13</sup> Vojtech Masntý, Christian Nuenlist, Anna Locher, *Records of the Political Consultative Committee, 1955-1991*, Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact (PHP), URL: [www.isn.ethz.ch/php](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php), by permission of the Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich and National Security Archive at the George Washington University, on behalf of the PHP, January 2003, accessed on 30.03.2020.

<sup>14</sup> \*\*\*, ANIC, *Fond CC al PCR, Cancelarie*, file 1/1957, p. 9.



situation. In October 1956, in Hungary, the revolt of the students and workers escalated, culminating in what is known as the Hungarian Revolution, suppressed with the help of Soviet tanks, generating victims also among the Soviets, plus a considerable number of Hungarian refugees. A few years later, in 1968, the new leader in Czechoslovakia, A. Dubcek, attempted to reform the system in the sense of democratisation, liberalisation and decentralisation. The events are known as the *Prague Spring*. Definitely, the mentioned events represented a major challenge to the line promoted by the USSR, which, that time, did not intervene unilaterally to put an end to them, but together with armed forces belonging to WTO member states, except Romania, which did not participate to the invasion of Czechoslovakia. In order to formalise the intervention legitimacy, the new leader in Moscow, Leonid Brezhnev, formulated and promoted the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine or the Doctrine of Limited Sovereignty.

As for Romania, after 1960, it interpreted *ad litteram* the principles stipulated in the mentioned Declaration on the friendship between the USSR and socialist states, bringing them to attention on many occasions, thus adopting a distinct position within the WTO, expressed, by its leaders and representatives, especially during the meetings having as main purposes the adoption of certain institutional mechanisms or the establishment of organisational bodies. Moreover, it emphasised the existence of the national element, starting with the famous speech delivered by Gheorghe Georghiu-Dej, in April 1964, known as Romania's declaration of independence from Moscow, in which the Romanian leader showed that passing the levers of competence to supranational bodies would turn sovereignty into a notion devoid of content<sup>15</sup>, a position maintained by his successor at the helm of the party and state, Nicolae Ceaușescu. In this context, taking into account the fact that at the WTO member states Bucharest meeting, in 1966, it was suggested to organise a conference on security and cooperation in Europe, a proposal to which NATO responded in 1969, following the Brussels summit, the negotiation process began with a view to organising the conference. In this respect, within the WTO, issues such as legitimacy, equality between member states, consultation process, and trust in satellite member states came, once more, into attention. Thus, it was considered necessary a reform of the WTO as well as an expression of that reform, formalised through a set of statutes.

On 17 March 1969, during the PCC meeting in Budapest, the Soviet Union managed, after a long period of time, to come to an agreement with member states on the WTO reorganisation and consolidation, with important consequences in the years to come. Following the meeting, the new WTO Secret Statutes were

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<sup>15</sup> \*\*\*, "Declarația cu privire la poziția Partidului Muncitoresc Român în problemele mișcării comuniste și muncitorești internaționale adoptată la Plenara lărgită a CC al PMR din aprilie 1964", in *Știința*, no. 6239, 26 April 1964, p. 33, Politică Publishing House, Bucharest, 1964.



adopted, more detailed documents that provided clarification on the authority of the commander in peacetime and the responsibilities of the other established bodies.

Thus, the Statute of the Committee of Ministers of Defence in Peace Time stipulated the defence ministers' responsibilities. Among them, the following can be mentioned: to examine the situation of the eventual opponent, its strategic plans and the trends in its forces' development, to make suggestions and recommendations regarding the enhancement of each member state defensive capabilities as well as the establishment and development of the Unified Armed Forces, to examine the theatres of war, the resources for war time, to discuss the military issues requiring joint coordination.

The Statute of the Unified Command in peace time defined the Unified Armed Forces as those forces and equipment that, according to the agreement of the member states, were assigned for joint activities, as well as the joint Military Councils that were established in accordance with Article 5 of the WTO Treaty. The UAF of the member states consisted of the national units provided for joint military operations, in accordance with the decisions of each country's government, tactical and operational units of all services, security squads, front and rear commands, as well as the UAF commanding forces. The strength of the forces was established by the government of each member state, following the recommendations of the UAF Supreme Commander, and based on the PCC decisions, depending on the available resources and economic possibilities. Those aspects were to be established by special agreements, signed by the UAF Supreme Commander and the defence ministers of each member state, and confirmed by their governments. During peace time, the troops and fleets assigned to the UAF remained directly subordinated to the ministries of defence from member countries, their activity being governed by national laws, statutes and regulations. The ministries of defence were totally responsible for the condition, armament, equipment, combat readiness, political indoctrination and military training of their troops, as well as the stocking of material and technical reserves. During war time, the organisation of the UAF command, the activities of the Unified Command, and the mutual relations between the Unified Command and the national commands were to be governed by special statutes. Moreover, the Unified Command highest service positions and leading bodies were established.

For the command of the UAF activities, additional bodies – the Military Council, the Staff, and the Committee on Technology – were established. With the consent of the governments, Liaisons of the Supreme Commander of the UAF could be appointed in the armed forces of the member states.

The Supreme Commander could be appointed from among the marshals (generals) of any of the member states, for a period of 4-6 years, his activity being guided by the decisions of the member states governments and the PCC



instructions. Among other responsibilities, he coordinated the operational plans for the employment of the troops and fleets assigned to the UAF, issued directives for increasing readiness, and scheduled the UAF joint activities (exercises, war games, training, conferences, consultations, discussions and other), being also responsible for their implementation.

The Chief of Staff, Commanders of air defence and naval troops, as well as the Chief of the Committee on Technology were to be appointed for a period of 4-6 years, by mutual agreement between the governments of member states.

The Military Council was to be responsible for the condition and development of the UAF, its activities having a consultative character<sup>16</sup>.

One mention to be made related to the establishment of the Committee on Technology is the important role it played in the field of standardisation, a key aspect in the context of the ability to conduct multinational operations, of interoperability and of the efficient use of resources. By comparison, in NATO, the Military Office for Standardisation was established in 1951, subsequently becoming the Office for NATO Standardisation, under the authority of the Committee for Standardisation<sup>17</sup>.

#### **4. Statute of the UAF Unified Command in War Time – 1980**

As it has already been mentioned, during war time, the organisation of the UAF command, the activities of the Unified Command and the mutual relations between the Unified Command and the national commands were to be governed by special statutes. Thus, the Statute of the Unified Command in War Time was adopted on 18 March 1980, defining the UAF composition, purpose, and rules of functioning, as well as its administrative bodies (the Highest Supreme Command, the UAF Supreme Commands in the Western and Southwestern theatres of war and the Commands of the Unified Baltic Fleet and the Unified Black Sea Fleet), the rules of command for air defence, the organisation of political activity, logistics and engineering-technical supply for the UAF in the theatre of war, the mutual relations between the administrative bodies of the UAF and the national political-military leadership of the WTO member states, as well as the provision of financial means.

In this regard, as far as the UAF were concerned, the strategic groups were defined as structures belonging to the land and the naval forces, as well as administrative bodies and support groups assigned to the UAF, subordinated to the UAF Supreme Commands in the Western and Southwestern theatres of war, directly

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<sup>16</sup> \*\*\*, *AZN 32854*, Federal Archives of Germany, Military Section, Freiburg, translated into English for the National Security Archive by Rebekka Weinel, in Vojtech Mastny, Malcolm Byrne (Editors), *A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991*, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-329.

<sup>17</sup> A.N.: For further details, see: \*\*\*, *NATO Standardisation Office*, URL: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_124879.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_124879.htm), accessed on 28.03.2020.



subordinated to the Highest Supreme Command, of which the Highest Supreme Commander was assigned. The General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces was the administrative body of the UAF Highest Supreme Command, through the unified national bodies that administered the forces and fleets. The Unified Black Sea Fleet consisted of the Soviet, Bulgarian and Romanian fleets, the Commander being the Commander of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet, and the Unified Baltic Sea Fleet comprised the fleets of the USSR, Poland, and the German Democratic Republic, under the Commander of the Soviet Baltic Sea Fleet.

With regard to the air defence, the UAF Supreme Commander in the theatre of war commanded the air defence forces in the theatre, under the coordination of the Highest Supreme Command. The principles of the UAF command in the theatre of war as well as the development of the administrative bodies and of the communication systems were based on special ordinances of the High Supreme Command.

The national political-military leadership of each WTO member state ensured the fully and timely execution of the Supreme Command orders and the high-level combat training for the troops and fleets assigned to the UAF in the theatre. Moreover, it ensured the established level of personnel, reserves, weaponry, equipment, materials and technical assets. In addition, it conducted activities to raise the moral-political condition of the personnel. The commanders of the national operational units were directly subordinated to the High Supreme Command.

In terms of budgetary funds, it was established, in compliance with the member states decisions, adopted at the PCC meeting on 17 March 1969, as follows: in the Western theatre of war, GDR – 16.2%, PPR – 23.1%, USSR – 44.5%, CSR – 16.2%, and in the Southwestern theatre of war, PRB – 16.9%, PRH – 14.3%, SRR – 24.1%, USSR – 44.5%<sup>18</sup>.

This statute was adopted in a different geopolitical context, mainly characterised by the fact that, in the late 1970s, the détente seemed to be no longer functional. Moreover, the use of conventional forces was again taken into consideration, especially following the formulation of the *grand strategy* by Soviet Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov. As a result, the importance of the armed forces of the member states acquired a new dimension, which, once more, emphasised the level of trust that could be projected by them. Moreover, starting in 1979, the deployment of Soviet troops in Afghanistan changed the problem data, all those against the background of a new conception of war in Europe. In this context, mention should be made that Romania refused to sign the statute, an attitude that was in line with the position previously adopted by it within the WTO. Certainly, as it has already been shown, Romania was not the only WTO member state that expressed visions which

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<sup>18</sup> \*\*\* , *AZN 32854, op. cit.*, pp. 429-434.





were not compliant with those promoted by the USSR, but the position adopted by Romania, as it appears from the documents in the archives of several former member states, contributed to the PCC transformation into a forum for discussion, as well as to the organisation maturity.

### 5. Romania's Position within WTO

In the context of socialist internationalism associated with Marxist-Leninist ideology, Romania adopted, as it has already been shown, a distinct position, focused on the national element, Marxist-Leninist ideology as well as on the option for an autonomous foreign policy, testing the acceptable limits imposed by the quality of WTO member state, thus contributing to the process of satellites emancipation that resulted in the WTO maturity and multilateralization. Among the main foreign policy main themes there can be mentioned the openness to the West, especially in the context of Ostpolitik, the relations with the *third world* states, the promotion of ideas related to disarmament, security and cooperation, Romania assuming, in the 1970, an active role in the organisation of the Helsinki event.

As a result, Romanian diplomacy made efforts to maintain as much autonomy as possible in foreign policy, expressing, on countless occasions, the idea that foreign ministers could act only within the limits of the competence provided by the laws of the state they represented. Therefore, they could not participate in the activity of a supranational body, meant to make recommendations on the foreign policy of parties and governments<sup>19</sup>, such as the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (CMFA) – a body of the WTO intended to be created. The establishment of the CMAE was proposed at the meeting of the PCC in Warsaw (1974), as a result of the fact that all heads of delegations spoke in favour of intensifying cooperation in the field of the fraternal countries foreign policy actions<sup>20</sup>. The new body was established following the decision adopted by the PCC in Bucharest, in November 1976, and the first meeting was to take place in Moscow, in May 1977, Romania maintaining the position that the body was a formal, consultative one, of foreign ministers and not of foreign policy.

With regard to political-military aspects, briefly, Romania's efforts got materialised as follows: at the special meeting of the chiefs of staff of the WTO

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<sup>19</sup> \*\*\*, "Problema 23.9.V.3.1969. Consfătuirea adjunctilor miniștrilor de Externe (Moscova) și a miniștrilor de Externe (Praga) din țările participante la Tratatul de la Varșovia, 23-24 și 30-31 octombrie 1969", *AMAE*, vol. 3, ff. 7-12, in Mioara Anton (editor), Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, Institutul Diplomatic Român, *Documente Diplomatice Române, Seria a III-a, România și Tratatul de la Varșovia. Conferințele miniștrilor Afacerilor Externe și ale adjunctilor lor (1966-1991)*, Buzău, Alpha MDN Publishing House, 2009, p. 179.

<sup>20</sup> \*\*\*, "Problema 241. 1975. 9V3, Consfătuirea adjunctilor miniștrilor Afacerilor Externe, Moscova, 29-30 ianuarie 1975", *AMAE*, ff. 48-56, in Mioara Anton (Editor), *op. cit.*, p. 449.





member countries on 4-9 February 1966, in Moscow, it was agreed to discuss the statute to be adopted, namely the Statute of the Unified Command in peace time, as well as to establish new military bodies, without reaching a conclusion. A few days later, between 10-12 February 1966, the deputy foreign ministers of the WTO member states met in Berlin to discuss the consolidation of the Political Consultative Committee and the establishment of additional institutions, without reaching an agreement, mainly because of Romania's opposition. During the same year, 1966, between 27-28 May, the ministers of defence from WTO member states met in Moscow. It was approved a draft statute of the unified command, Romania expressing its reserves, especially since no significant progress was made regarding the establishment of new military institutions. The draft was to be submitted for approval to the Political Consultative Committee and national governments. In 1967, at the meeting of the chiefs of staff in Dresden, on 16 November, it was suggested the establishment of a General Staff of the Unified Command and of a Committee on Technology, as the first steps in the WTO reorganisation, Romania expressing its opposition in this regard. The next year, between 29 February-1 March, in Prague, it was organised a meeting for chiefs of staff, in order to resume the project of the alliance reorganisation. It was decided the establishment of the Military Council, despite Romania's opposition. The Political Consultative Committee assembled, between 6-7 March 1968, in Sofia, and adopted the decision, noting that Romania abstained from voting, to establish a General Staff of the Unified Command and a Military Council. During the same year, between 29-30 October, at the meeting of the defence ministers in Moscow, it was agreed on new structures of the alliance. Romania signed the agreements but reserved the right to examine the provisions related to authorising the supreme commander to deploy forces in the territories of member states in peace time. Against the background of the existing dissensions between the USSR and Romania, on 18-19 May 1970, L. Brezhnev and N. Ceaușescu met in Moscow, without a satisfactory result regarding their resolution. During the following year, on 2 August 1971, the heads of the WTO member states met in Crimea. At the meeting of defence ministers in Berlin, between 9-10 February 1972, the Chief of Staff of the WTO, Serghei Stemenko, noted a détente in the relations between the WTO and NATO, emphasising that, despite the situation, NATO remained a threat. Romania's representatives countered the idea of joint measures for air defence. Between 28-30 October 1972, at the meeting of the Military Council in Bucharest, the shortening of the alert time was approved. In this context, Romania joined the common air defence plan as well as the common counterintelligence plan, but opposed other issues on the agenda such as allowing the WTO forces transit in the territories of member states. Two years later, at the meeting of the defence ministers in Bucharest, between 5-7 February 1974, N. Ceaușescu opposed the creation of a unified communications system within the



WTO and criticised the establishment of a regional command point in Bulgaria. Between 10-11 December 1976, defence ministers met in Prague, Romania opposing the establishment of a WTO agency for equipment standardisation. A year later, on 20 October 1977, at the meeting of the Military Council in Sofia, Romania refused to participate in the following command training, invoking the lack in clarity of the unified command principles in war time. The main topic of discussion at the meeting of the chiefs of staff in Sofia, between 12-14 June 1978, was represented by the WTO forces development trends for the period 1981-1985, pressure being exerted for the completion of the statute of unified command in war time, regardless of the opposition expressed by Romania. Between 22-23 November 1978, at the PCC meeting in Moscow, it was agreed to prepare a draft statute, by November 1979. It was required the qualitative development of the WTO forces as well as the establishment of high-standard special forces within each of the national armed forces. During the talks of the Supreme Command working group in Bucharest, between 21-27 November 1979, there were emphasised fundamental differences of opinion, between Romania and the other WTO member states, regarding the statute of the unified command in war time. Between 3-6 December 1979, at the meeting of the defence ministers in Warsaw, it was discussed the Soviet draft of the unified command principles in war time as well as the suggestion to establish a joint early warning system in the event of nuclear strikes. In this context, the representatives of Romania advanced the idea of unilateral reduction in defence budgets. At the meeting of the chiefs of staff from the WTO member states, 18 March 1980, it was adopted the Statute of the WTO Forces Unified Command in War Time. Following the objections formulated by N. Ceaușescu, it was agreed that the document should enter into force only for the signatories. On 30 April 1980, WTO member states, except Romania, agreed that L. Brezhnev would be appointed the WTO forces Supreme Commander. Romania submitted a draft for the reorganisation and democratisation of the WTO bodies on 4 July 1988, draft discussed, on 17 October 1988, when it was organised an extraordinary meeting of the defence ministers in Prague, following the disclosure of information on the strength of the troops and armament, and rejected at the expert-level meeting of the foreign affairs and defence ministers in Moscow, 8-9 December 1988. Between 14-15 February 1989, during the second expert-level meeting, in Bucharest, Romania's suggestion to establish a separate Political Consultative Committee for the WTO and to replace the Committee of Defence Ministers with a Military Committee was also rejected, emphasising the necessity of a political consultative body, of a multilateral informing group, as well as the importance of an extended role for the secretariat<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Vojtech Mastny, Malcolm Byrne (Editors), *op. cit.*, pp. 31-49.



Moreover, in this context, it should be mentioned the fact that, not having Soviet troops stationed on the national territory since 1958, Romania developed the entire people defence doctrine, a related law being adopted in 1972, namely the *Law no. 14 on 28 December 1972 on the organisation of the national defence of the Socialist Republic of Romania*<sup>22</sup>, which was to enter into force on 31 March 1973.

A brief analysis of the law articles highlights some important aspects. Thus, the law stipulated the preservation of the independence and sovereignty of the state as a sacred duty of any citizen. Moreover, it was mentioned the idea of a fundamental conception of the defence system developed by the Defence Council, a national body, its decisions being binding for all the bodies they referred to, the Council was accountable for its entire activity before the CC of the RCP – the leading political body – and before the Grand National Assembly. Considering that the chain of command and control in the WTO was represented, practically, by the Defence Council of the USSR to the defence councils of the member states, it is observed the distinct position adopted by Romania within the WTO. Moreover, the Defence Council of each member state had authority over the Ministry of Defence, defence ministers coordinating directly with the Soviet Ministry of Defence and never with each other on matters of general interest, while the 1972 law stipulated that the Ministry of National Defence and the Ministry of Internal Affairs carried out the party and state policy in the field of defence of the country, public order and state security. In addition, the patriotic guards were national, armed elements, so they could not be subordinated other than nationally, having responsibilities related to strengthening the country's defence capacity<sup>23</sup>.

### Conclusions

From the presented data, it can be observed that, at least during the formative period of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, the mechanism of political consultation existed only in theory. This aspect may be an indication of the most important state of the organisation lack of trust in its partners that, declaratively, were considered equals. Consensus is generally difficult to obtain within an alliance and, more often than not, it is not desirable for it to be assumed a priori, a situation that could result in a deadlock or lack of progress.

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<sup>22</sup> \*\*\*, *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 160, December 29, 1972, URL: <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetailiiDocumentAfis/297>, accessed on 25.03.2020.

<sup>23</sup> A.N.: For further details regarding the Patriotic Guards, see Diana Cristiana Lupu, Gligor Văidean, "Alternative National Defence and Security Structures during the Cold War Period. Case Study – Romania and the Balkans", in Florian Cărciumaru, Mirela Atanasiu (Editors), *Proceedings, International Scientific Conference, Strategies XXI, the Complex and Dynamic Nature of the Security Environment*, vol. 2, "Carol I" National Defence University Publishing House, 2019, pp. 180-190.



With regard to the two political-military organisations – WTO and NATO, it is evident, in the presented context, that the decision-making process was more effective within the WTO than within NATO, but, under the given circumstances, questions arose regarding the possibility to implement the adopted decisions. However, as the WTO matured as an alliance, contradictory views started to be accepted – an example in this regard being the position Romania adopted, on many occasions, to the extent it did not represent a major danger for the alliance management. Moreover, it can be noted that the organisational structure was dominated by the Soviets, with the intention of exercising a rigorous control over the member states.

As far as the WTO Armed Forces Unified Command was concerned, the main problem that was signalled, especially by Romania, referred to its character of a supranational body, perceived as a higher echelon of the general staffs of the member states, as it can be noted from the presentation of the two statutes – in peace (1969), and in war time (1980) respectively. Following the analyses of the statutes, it can be also noted the fact that, as the WTO became mature and multilateral, a clear delineation emerged between the political and the military components. Moreover, as far as the military component was concerned, the responsibilities of the WTO Armed Forces Supreme Command, training and standardisation, were somewhat separate from those of the high commands established on the anticipated strategic directions, namely the conduct of war.

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# QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF MOTIVATIONS FOR BEING A SOLDIER

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*Background and aims: The main topic of the study is learning more about and demonstrating soldiers' motivations and comparing them to the needs identified in the military need-hierarchy model. In order to improve the retention capability, the aim of the study has been to identify those motivational factors which help continue in the military service.*

*Methods: The subjects were soldiers from the Hungarian Army, selected by random sampling (n=28). The participants were men and women, officers and NCOs, respectively. The interviewees have been asked to complete the open sentence "I would like to be a soldier, because...". The texts have been analyzed using the Grounded Theory method.*

*Results: The basis of the obtained pyramid is the Military Career together with the Organizational Culture, both associated with the basic needs described in the model (e.g. good equipment, attractive salary). Security could be divided into two parts (markedly distinct from the theoretical model), looking from security and providing help, respectively. Other main topics are Team Spirit, Learning and Development, Looking for Challenges, Feeling of Life and Patriotism, respectively. The whole pyramid is transfixed by Appreciation being present all around, a topic worth for further research.*

*Conclusion: In addition to the general needs present in any occupation (such as safe job, emotional and physical security, housing allocation, good salary),*

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*military personnel show special, higher level needs: the feeling of belonging, team cohesion, appreciation, admission, and self-actualization.*

**Keywords:** *soldiers; motivations; needs; retaining service; military career; Grounded Theory (GT); challenge.*

## 1. Theoretical Background

What does it mean being a soldier? Is it pride, bravery? Subsistence, self-realization, challenge? Safety, development or only satisfaction of basic needs and some self-actualization? A meaty life, in which the soldier finds himself and the meaning of life, progress, family, safety and challenge – the answer does not seem to be really simple to this question. To get an authentic answer, we should ask the soldiers themselves.

The role of the military in the society is, without a shred of doubt, very important: defending the country, providing security for the inhabitants, serving undisputed basic needs of the society. Since the suspension of the line infantry (2004), i.e. the compulsory military service, appreciation of the military has decreased, it has experienced loss of its prestige. People look at the professional armies in a different way, they are happy with the elimination of the compulsory service, but, at the same time, they roll away from the military. The army has become only an employer; military is now regarded as a “profession”. Of course, rolling away is largely affected by absence of war in the country, by having no armed conflicts either, and from the fact that the military provides less information about itself and is kind of separated within the society. This has brought about those people have only old stereotypes and limited information about the military as such and about the soldiers, as has been shown by recent surveys. People still admire the uniform; safety provided by the soldiers is regarded as basic and expected. It has also been found that, in addition to opinions due to the appearances and to the individual needs, ignorance is also present, with the lack of knowledge about the needs and motivations of the present-day soldiers in the center<sup>1</sup>.

Although the alumina plant red sludge accident, floods, snow problems, the present-day border protection tasks and the military development programs have called the attention on the military, our knowledge about the military as such has not been augmented at all. Therefore, this paper intends to fill this gap for both the society and the psychologist, respectively, and, also, for those readers who are interested in the military life.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Pákozdi, M. Tribol-Tóth, “MHP parancsnoki országjárás tapasztalatai”, 2019 [“Experiences of the Hungarian Army Commander’s Countryside Visit”], *Honvédségi Szemle*, vol. 148. 2020/3, pp. 101-108.



Based on the international literature, it becomes obvious that military forces of different nations – using the Maslow-pyramid – have concluded that the most popular needs among soldiers are security, proper purveyance and the social appreciation<sup>2,3,4,5,6</sup>. In addition, for soldiers it is also important that the individual's (soldier's) needs and the social demands should meet at the different levels<sup>7</sup>.

## 2. Introducing the Military Hierarchy of Needs

To increase the retention ability, it seems inevitable, today, to learn what it means to be a soldier. To know which are those motivating factors that help remaining in the military, or even to appreciate it as a profession<sup>8</sup>. It is also interesting how the motivation profile changes during the service. In the Maslow-theory<sup>9</sup> based model of the military hierarchy of needs, several basic needs can be identified, such as proper working conditions, quality of the equipment, attractive salary, housing assistance etc. General flexible security needs also including proper work circumstances, professional skills required by the particular job assignment, and even the *good and affectionate family relationships*.

*Social/associate needs*, such as clubs, sport facilities, teambuilding programs, excursions, open communication, the feeling of belonging and the team spirit seem to be important, as well. *Need for appreciation/recognition*, such as regular positive feedback, honorable mentions and rewards cannot be left out, as well as the *need for self-realization*. The latter is associated with supporting challenging tasks, career opportunities and creativity. In this phase, the soldiers try to develop the system, to look for new ways to transfer their patriotic and team-oriented faith, they are ready to help improve the social acceptance of the military forces by serving the

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<sup>2</sup> Allison Peterson, "The goal of motivation in the military: soldier satisfaction or soldier performance", 1978, URL: [www.apps.dict.mil](http://www.apps.dict.mil), accessed on 10.05.2018.

<sup>3</sup> P. Baker, "Maslow, Needs and War", 2012, URL: [www.apps.dtic.mil](http://www.apps.dtic.mil), accessed on 29.09.2019.

<sup>4</sup> A. Broadbridge, E. Parsons, "Gender and career choice. Experiences of UK charity retail managers", *Career Development International*, 2005, Vol. 10, No. 2, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. 80-97.

<sup>5</sup> R.K. Fullinwider, *Conscripts and Volunteers: Military Requirements, Social Justice, and the All-Volunteer Force*, Totowa, NJ, Rowman & Allanheld, 1983.

<sup>6</sup> R.C. Reardon, J.G. Lenz, "Holland's theory and career assessment", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 55/1, 1999, pp.102-113.

<sup>7</sup> M.J. Sirgy, "A Social Cognition Model of Consumer Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction: An Experiment", *Psychology and Marketing*, New York, 1984, Vol. 1, No. 2, p.27.

<sup>8</sup> S.A. Miller, M.S. Clinton, J.P. Carrey, "The relationship of Motivators, Needs, and Involvement Factors to Preferences for Military Recruitment Slogans", *Journal of Advertising Research*, 2007, 47/1, pp. 66-78.

<sup>9</sup> A. Maslow, "A theory of human motivation", *Psychological Review*, 1943, Vol. 50, pp. 370-396.



community and by initiating development of the organization<sup>10,11,12</sup>.

While examining motivations of the young (so-called Y/born between 1997-1994/ and Z/born between 1995-2012) generation, one can realize their strong demand for immediate self-realization, which they imagine by external service, adventures, workload, advancement and studying. It is also a fact that, in addition to satisfying the basic needs, they are characterized by high dedication and by regarding social appreciation of the military as a priority<sup>13,14</sup>.

According to McClelland's theory<sup>15</sup>, soldiers' extrinsic motivation includes secure living, secure job, good armor, appropriate nutrition, prizes and recognition, respectively. Intrinsic motivations include those facilitating to find new challenges and provide enjoyment of their work<sup>16</sup>. For soldiers, these may be missions or other challenging assignments, acquiring new equipment, participation in special exercises (special operations, sharpshooting, flying etc.).

### 3. Research Findings about Military Affairs

Old time war procedures have significantly changed mainly due to the industrial revolution and to the fast development of the war equipment and the Internet<sup>17</sup>. The short and fast war associated fateful actions affecting large crowds, the changing environment require high level training, continuous development, fast reactions

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<sup>10</sup> Pákozdi M., Torba A., *A Magyar Honvédség személyi állományának motivációhierarchiája* ["Motivation Hierarchy of the Military Personnel of the Hungarian Army"], *Honvédségi Szemle*, Vol 148. 2020/2, pp. 38-47.

<sup>11</sup> R.M. Schuler, J.P. Cangemi, "A military approach to Maslow's hierarchy of needs", *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 1978, URL: <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1980-12000-001>, accessed on 29.09.2019.

<sup>12</sup> Brindle, "Military service and after: a hierarchy of needs", 2019, URL: <https://www.diplomaticcourier.com/posts/military-service-and-after-a-hierarchy-of-needs>, accessed on 08.10.2019.

<sup>13</sup> M. Pákozdi, Zs. Fejes, "A katona-egészségügyi szakállomány pályaelhagyás motívumainak feltárása" ["Uncovering motivations of military health-care professionals for leaving the career"], in *Magyar Honvédség Egészségügyi Központ A hon-és rendvédelmi egészségügyi dolgozók V. tudományos-szakmai konferenciája* [Hungarian Army Health-care Center (Ed.), *Military and Defence Service 5th Scientific Conference*], Budapest, Hungary, 11-12.11.2015, pp. 18-34.

<sup>14</sup> M. Pákozdi, "A Magyar Honvédség társadalmi megítélése (kvalitatív kutatások)" ["Social Recognition of the Hungarian Army (qualitative studies) – *Internal documents*"], 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Ronald Pardee, *Motivation Theories of Maslow, Herzberg, McGregor and McClelland. A Literature Review of Selected Theories Dealing with Job Satisfaction and Motivation*, 1990, URL: [files.eric.ed.gov](https://files.eric.ed.gov), accessed on 10.12.2016.

<sup>16</sup> A.M. Grant, J. Shin, "Work Motivation: Directing, Energizing, and Maintaining Effort", in R.M. Ryan (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Human Motivation*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> F. Suvankulov, "Internet recruitment and job performance: case of the US Army", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 2013, 24/11.



of the soldiers that may be associated with significant physical and mental load. To comply with these military values, it may frequently require separation from the soldiers' family that might also increase their tension. Despite their significant social recognition associated with their role in providing safety – expressed by the slogan “The Homeland above all” –, not enough people accept the military service. However, it is also true that safety, the permanent readiness to act is expected from the soldiers within all and any circumstances even if it is a catastrophe or a terrorist action<sup>18</sup>.

Almost all NATO member states face a permanent lack of staff because of both recruitment and other issues. An earlier representative study about career choice in the military healthcare (n=120) has shown that the dominant factors for joining the military service are special pension (already closed out), advantages of the salary and allowance system, prestige of the military service, housing allocation, reduced rate of the kindergarten services, stipends, safe living and the “love to be a soldier” feelings<sup>19</sup>.

We have previously studied the soldiers' replies to the question “*How to become a soldier? A survey of the personnel serving in the military health care*”<sup>20</sup>. We have found that preparation for the military career, meeting the demands of suitability, including bravery and the high prestige of the service, constitute a significant challenge for the applicants. Basic motivations for selecting the military career were safety and the secure future, and, although less dominantly, also adventure seeking<sup>20 21</sup>.

Regarding those soldiers who are only beginning their military career, one can distinguish using the results of interviews and motivation analysis, two separate groups. One group consists of those characters who care about security, who select the military career according to external motivations (e.g. safe subsistence, secure job, good income and predictability). The other group consists of characters looking for challenges who join the military because of internal motivations (challenges, testing, missions, curiosity). Material and emotional safety are also important for them but they also can find them in other, non-military environment. These facts have helped them get the respect and create an appropriate online recruitment call.

A NATO survey asking those serving in the military-healthcare, in 2010-2013, in 22 countries – including Hungary – has revealed that it is not enough to recruit, the well-trained soldier must also be kept in the military long-term. Factors for keeping

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<sup>18</sup> M. Pákozdi, M. Tribol-Tóth, *op. cit.*.

<sup>19</sup> M. Pákozdi, Zs. Fejes, *op. cit.*.

<sup>20</sup> M. Pákozdi, György Bardos, “How to become a soldier? A survey of the personnel serving in the military health care”, *Strategic Impact Journal*, no. 1/2020.

<sup>21</sup> P. Bury, “Recruitment And Retention In British Army Reserve Logistic Units”, in *Armed Forces & Society*, 2017.



were (in decreasing order): work abroad, higher salary, better job circumstances, and increasing/decreasing patient nexus.<sup>22</sup>

The Commander of the Hungarian Army has organized a countrywide visit aimed at improving the internal communication. Following this countrywide visit, a representative survey among the soldiers (n=288) has shown that the strength regards positively to the future of the Hungarian Army. The Commander has managed to transfer his positive future belief to the soldiers who felt honored by these talks, which has proven to be a strong incentive in their work. However, the shortages mentioned by the strength – life – and work circumstances, service perspectives – should still be addressed as soon as possible<sup>23</sup>. This study has also called the attention to increase the retaining abilities, as well as the results of the NATO survey.

#### 4. International Outlook

The US Army pays extra attention to the physical-mental well-being of its soldiers. For this, based on the need-hierarchy of the Maslow-pyramid, in 2017 they had conducted a survey on the basic needs among 4856 non-commissioned officers (NCOs). For those participating, security and food appeared as dominant needs<sup>24</sup>. Sirgy has concluded that the social demands (physical needs of the citizens, sovereignty, global commerce, honour) should meet the individual needs to become bases for proper development.

Lieutenant-colonel Baker of the American Air Force, in his article published, in 2012, and entitled “Maslow, Needs and War”<sup>25</sup>, has examined the Maslow-needs and Sirgy’s social demands in the frame of wars (Kuwait, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq etc.). In his study, the requirement for security is the outstanding need (both at the individual and social level) together with the social appreciation of the soldiers.

#### 5. Research Agenda

The aim of this study has been to learn more about the motivation of the military personnel and to compare the motivations to the needs summarized by the military hierarchy needs model. We believe the results may help psychologists create new theories and models, which, in addition to the organization psychology,

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<sup>22</sup> \*\*\*, “Report responding to the COMEDS tasking to assess the health care worker shortage in EAPC Nations”, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, 2015.

<sup>23</sup> M. Pákozdi, M. Tribol-Tóth, *op. cit.*.

<sup>24</sup> \*\*\*, “ADP 6-22 Army Leadership and The Profession”, 2019, URL: [www.usacac.army.mil](http://www.usacac.army.mil), accessed on 19.09.2019.

<sup>25</sup> P. Baker, *op. cit.*.



may include individual values, characters and strengths combined with the basic features of the military profession.

The central phenomenon found here – development of the motivational profile of the military service – might lead to the construction of a multifactorial motivational questionnaire, which may help determine the possible ways of interventions.

## 6. Methods

### *Sample*

The study was run among the soldiers of the Hungarian Army, within the frame of military panels (e.g. workgroup meetings, military programs etc.) that included representatives of different military organizations. Exposing the narratives required about 10 minutes for the participants selected by unintentional sampling (n=28). Participation in the study had been voluntary and anonymous. We preferred to get personal and truthful opinions; thus, we had omitted getting data on the gender, age, rank, length of service and the military branch, which might have distorted the results. The basic condition for participating in the survey was at least 5 years of military service (necessary for having enough military socialization), for knowing the system and for the individual involvement and decision making which might significantly influence motivations. There were included males and females, officers and NCOs, respectively. The requirement for the interview was replying to the open question “*I would like to be a soldier, because....*”, definitely based on self-expression.

### *Analysis and coding*

The qualitative analysis has been done by using the Grounded Theory narrative method<sup>26,27,28,29,30</sup>. The interviews were recorded and then a transcript had been made, thus resulting in written forms of the interviews. This process has been described earlier, hereby we reproduce this description: “During the analysis, three levels of coding were applied: open (basic) coding, axial coding and selective coding. This process resulted in less and less codes representing larger and larger categories

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<sup>26</sup> A. Bryant, *Grounded Theory and Grounded Theorizing: Pragmatism in Research Practice*, Oxford University Press, New York, USA, 2017.

<sup>27</sup> K. Chamberlain, “Using grounded theory in health psychology. *Qualitative Health Psychology*”, *Theories and Methods*, 1999, pp. 183-201.

<sup>28</sup> S. N. Khan, “Qualitative research method: Grounded Theory”, *International Journal of Business and Management*, 9(11): 224-233, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> A. Strauss, J.M. Corbin, *Grounded theory in practice*, Sage Publications, 1997.

<sup>30</sup> A. Strauss, J.M. Corbin, “Grounded theory methodology – an overview”, in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 1990.





leading to a final concentrated overview of the interviews<sup>31</sup>.

After reading over the texts several times, first we created open codes by assigning categories to the meaningful segments of the text (i.e. words, expressions or sentences). During further processing, some categories have been kept while others were rejected. The basic idea was to find out what a certain category can tell us about the basic problems, components and aspects of the studied phenomenon. In this phase, we had examined the context of the codes, that is, their antecedents, circumstances and consequences, their environment, space and time frame.

### ***Axial coding***

During the axial coding, we intended to find conceptual relationships among the categories (open codes) by looking for answers to such questions as what could a certain category tell about the basic topics, parts, different aspects of the study, and for associations between individual codes and different dimensions, as well. By the end of the axial coding, basic- and subcategories had been available, ready to look for relationships and correspondences. The notes recorded in this phase helped the analysis in the following phases of the research.

### ***Selective coding***

Finally, during the selective coding, the categories and subcategories obtained in the first two phases were collected and grouped under new, higher level summarizing codes and were fitted to the text (that is, correspondence among the codes and the text were checked for validation of the relationships). The categories left out through the axial coding were omitted in this phase.

The tables below show the selective codes and the basic terms belonging to them.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Martha Pakozdi, Gyorgy Bardos, “How to become a soldier? A survey of the personnel serving in the military health care”, *Strategic Impact journal*, no. 1/2020.

<sup>32</sup> M. Pakozdi, Gyorgy Bardos, *op. cit.*



Table no. 1a

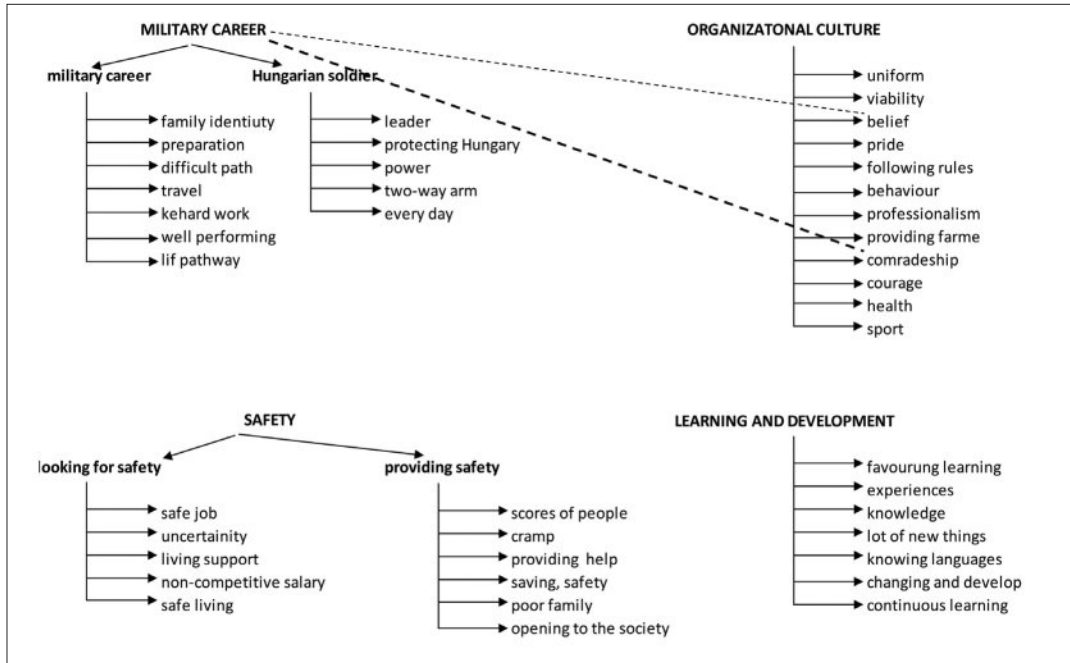
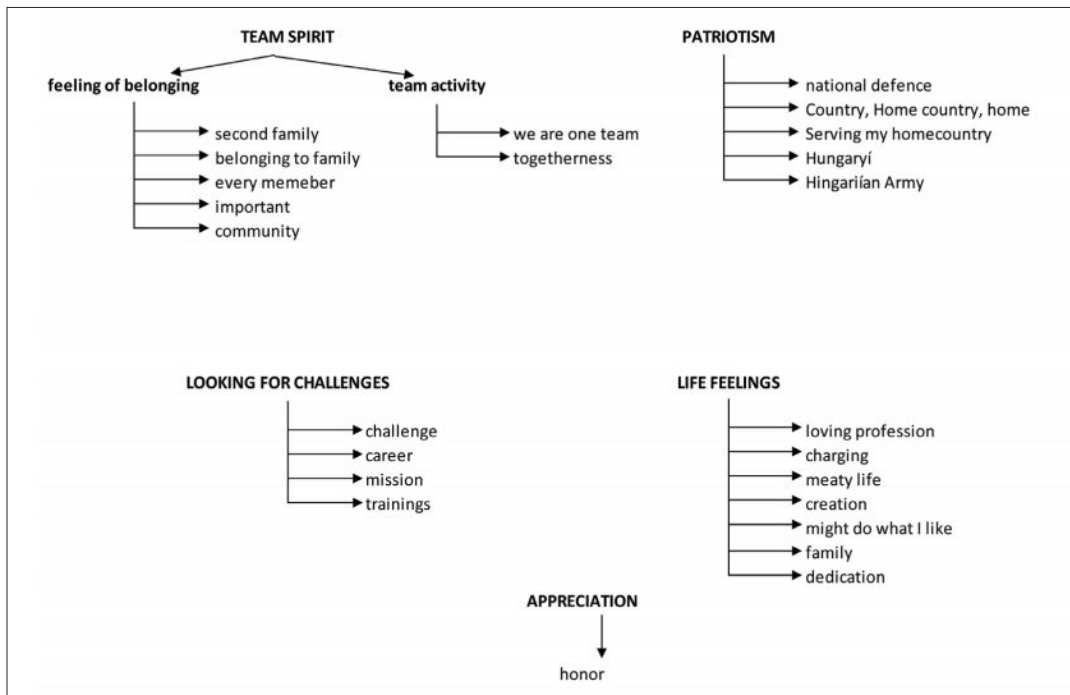
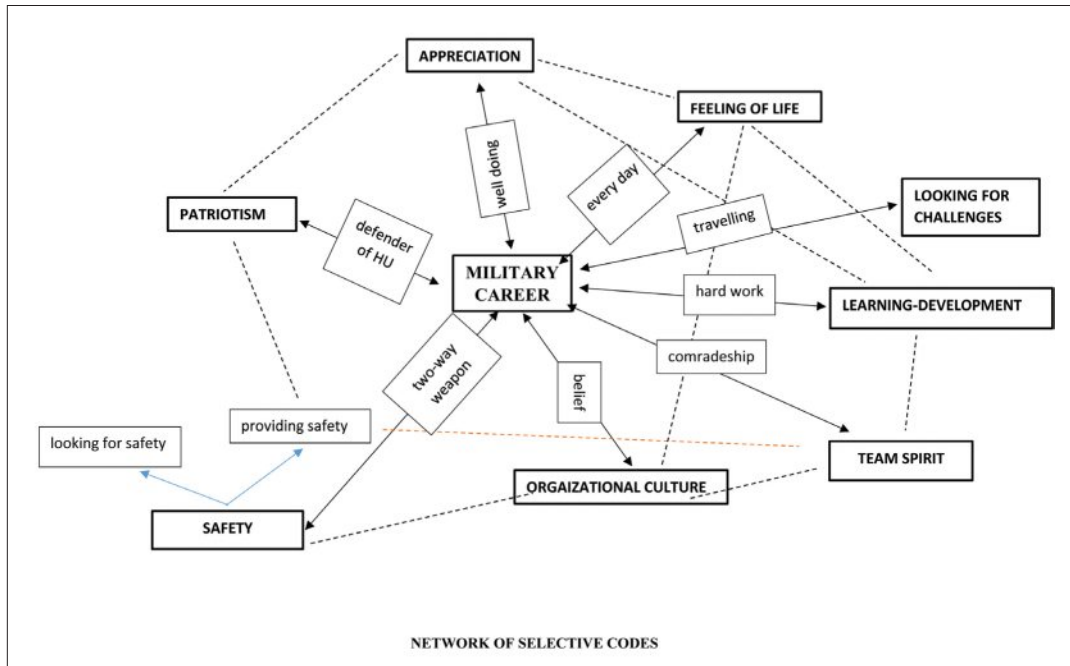


Table no. 1a and Table no. 1b: Selective codes and the terms belonging to them

Table no. 1b



**Table no. 2:** Overview of the selective codes and the terms belonging to them

## 7. Results

The texts referred to factors affecting remaining on the military pathway, whereas the soldiers described their feelings by an external intention. The narratives generally spoke in first person singular and in present tense, but the social experiences were mentioned in plural. Sometimes the narratives also mentioned negative factors, probably expressing possible dissatisfaction for the military occupation<sup>33</sup>. Interviewees used singular tense while talking about themselves, but used plural when talking about social issues; thus, the analysis could easily differentiate between these different issues. Not only positive but, sometimes, negative aspects of the military occupation were mentioned.

All texts are self-narratives of the soldiers of the Hungarian Army. Of the selective codes, the term *military career* appears as a unique and central element in the reports. All self-narratives deal with the multiple faces of the military career, from the family intention to the walk of life. Richness of the career is reflected by the military preparation through which military socialization commences. However, the career is also a *difficult path*, should be *well-done every day*, is *hard work*, a

<sup>33</sup> Martha Pakozdi, Gyorgy Bardos, "How to become a soldier? A survey of the personnel serving in the military health care", *Strategic Impact Journal*, no. 1, 2020.



*two-way weapon* and *power*. The term *Hungarian soldier* is a dominant element of the reports, associated with the *defender of Hungary*.

The *organizational culture* contains the *uniform*, which, in itself, mediates value and is a symbol; and, also, *faith* and *comradeship*, associated with the soldier's everyday service. In addition to *bravery* and *professionalism*, they mention norms of *behavior* and orderliness, providing a *frame* for the soldier as an individual. The soldiers expect health and sport services as values and norms for themselves, which appears in the narratives as a demand provided by the military.

As basic items of the *safety*, *looking for security* and *providing safety* appear in the reports. In almost all texts, the central keywords are *secure job*, *safe subsistence* and *housing assistance*, which are clearly associated with the feeling of future uncertainty and with the non-competitive salary. Safety also clearly means giving help to scores of people being in hard run, as well as active involvement in providing protection and safety for the whole society.

In addition to the uniform as a symbol, the *team spirit* has a significant affect for both soldiers (as individuals) and for society. The sub code teamwork comprises the phrase we are one team and also togetherness in reaching the common aims, which characterize the organization and the soldier, as well. The feeling of belonging, as a sub code is also element of the reports, associated with the *second family*, with the *belonging to family*, with *demanding community*, where *every member is important*; these appear as internal desires for every person engaged in the military profession.

*Learning and development* results in the cognition of numerous new things, through knowledge and language skills acquired by experiencing and continuous learning, not only on the battlefield, but also in time of peace. Loving to learn is the basis of changing and development, being preferred in almost all reports.

*Patriotism* appears in the most dominant way in the phrase "Serving the Country", which is present in all reports. High commitment characterizes those expressions as *country*, *homeland*, *home*, *military of Hungary*, respectively. Helping to be involved in national defense shows love toward the members of the society, which is associated with providing security.

*Appreciation* is a basic need of every soldier. It is so strong in itself, that it stands as a separate necessity and could be associated with almost all codes.

*Looking for challenges* contains mission, as the strongest challenge, but also drills appear in which participation largely depends on the rank and position. These two terms are also associated with the desire of fast advancement in career.

The *meaningful life*, as a feeling of life allows the person to do whatever *he/she likes*, in which one can *fill up*, where feelings may lead to the commitment. *Family*, in addition to the feeling of belonging, is present as the soldier's own family referring to a high-level self-recognition and demands, being the motor for happiness and self-realization, which could be reached even within the Military of Hungary.



The present-day transformation regarding the Military of Hungary determines soldiers' everyday life. It is not easy to handle the continuously changing conditions for the, otherwise, loaded staff. Continuous arrival, application and management of the military equipment, as well as the transformation of the system creates uncertainty in the soldiers. Recognizing this problem, the leadership of the Military of Hungary has started its nationwide visiting activity in the frame of the whole military personnel.

The "Network of selective codes" clearly shows that the needs originate from the phrase *military career* and also returns there. The *organizational culture* associated with *military career* emerges through the value of beliefs. The soldier can complete his mission under any circumstances, for which believing in himself and in his ability seems necessary. *Organizational culture* is associated with *security* and with *team spirit*, respectively, which, in themselves, represent the values of the military life. *Security* is present in two sub codes of this sample. Looking for security contains such basic needs as subsistence and secure job, as well as saving and safety, that is assistance provided for the many people being hard run.

The relationship between *team spirit* and *assistance* appears through the strength of the second family, the community, in which all members are equally important, though this relationship needs to be further studied. In contrast, relationship between *patriotism* and *assistance* is valid and is based on experiences, since the main task of the military is to guarantee the security of the Hungarian citizens.

Association between *team spirit* and *learning* and *development*, respectively, is based on the knowledge acquired within the teamwork.

*Appreciation*, as can be seen in the figure, provides a frame for the *military career*. It has such a strong association with it, that may almost completely satisfy the safety needs. The appreciated soldier is a valuable asset, learns and develops, provides security, is a fellow soldier, and has the feeling of life. On the other hand, we have not found any relationship between *appreciation* and *looking for challenges*, which, of course, does not exclude further research and analysis in this regard.

## Conclusions

As opposed to the military needs pyramid set up in the theoretical model, the results of the present research differ regarding both the needs hierarchy and the phrasing.

The basis of the pyramid is the *military career*; above which one can find the *organizational culture*, both associated with the basic needs included into the model. Unlike the theoretical model, *security* can be divided into two parts, looking for security and providing help, respectively. This seems to be a marked difference



from the theoretical model.

Above these, one can find *team spirit*, also being composed of two parts, feeling of belongingness and teamwork, probably corresponding to social bonds.

The next element is *learning and development*, a hard task being present in all reports, originally not included as such in the theoretical model, only being element of self-realization.

*Looking for challenges* is also associated with self-realization in the model, while in this sample it is so characteristic that we handle it as a separate need.

*Feeling of life*, also associated with the self-realization in the model, here represents the peak of the pyramid. It collects such forces and needs which shape the commitment of the soldiers and also comprise driving forces of the happy life.

*Appreciation* pervades the whole pyramid and it is simultaneously present at all levels. As a need, it is the same as security and represents a marked difference from the original model, thus seems worth for further research.

Comparing these results with those obtained in the nationwide research program, one can establish that, in addition to the dominant need for appreciation, the demand for security is also significantly present. This implies that it is worth looking for further relationships between these two needs.

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# THE IRREGULAR MASS MIGRATION FROM THE CIVILIAN PERSPECTIVE

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*The phenomenon of migration is as old as humanity, and in every historical period it has intensified or decreased based on different situations that could have emerged. Nowadays, Europe faces such a huge mass migration that it has not been seen for a long time. During the last year, more than one million people arrived in Europe, out of which 400,000 via Hungary. This number surprised not only politicians and experts on the topic, but also the civil population and the attitude towards this phenomenon caused great division, both politically and from civilian perspective. It showed the division within the EU in that the Member States had totally different points of view regarding this phenomenon and regarding its root causes and they imagined totally different solutions for it. There are places where they highlighted the humanitarian aspect, in other places they placed their citizen's safety first, and every other action had to be adjusted to this.*

**Keywords:** *migration crisis; border protection; subjective sense of security; civil attitudes; empirical research.*

## 1. Population Movement?

First of all, there are some questions that need to be answered. Some of them are: what was the background of the migration of 2015 towards Europe? Is there anything new about it or it had just repeated as something that occurred many times

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before? The concept of population movement is well-known to historians, many population movements have occurred during the history of mankind, and there was always an underlying cause. It could have been a natural disaster, overpopulation, war or a great desire for conquest. Some examples: the written history says that great migration waves started from the Middle Ages, or from the end of antiquity. One of the great migratory peoples of the period between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries are the Huns, who crossed the Volga River and entered the center of the Roman Empire. The Hun nation was really heterogeneous because they were also composed of Turks, Iranians and Germans, and because they continued the conquest process and migrated toward West Europe together with the people whose territories they had conquered. The vandals had migrated from North Europe to North Africa, where they founded an empire. Later, the Byzantine Empire destroyed it. Of course, we could include on the list the Goths (especially the Ostrogoths and the Visigoths), Gepids, Franks, Saxons, and many others. These population shifts have caused massive economic, cultural and social changes in Europe. We cannot state that these population movements have never repeated later, for example the Hungarians took hold of their homeland between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century, during a mass migration period.

Can we call the events of 2015 a population movement? By no means can we say that the migration process has started in 2015, because many people had arrived in Europe as migrants before but nowadays there is a massive permanent flow from Asia and Africa. From former colonies of Western European countries numerous people arrived to the continent during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The modern-day mass migration<sup>1</sup> reached its peak in fall of 2015, and it shocked many European countries. Groups of people had arrived before, but a crowd such as the one in the fall of 2015 was never seen before, by contemporary Europeans, because they had never faced a mass migration that large before. Population movement is still active nowadays, with some changes of migration routes. According to our information, in 2017, 2.4 million<sup>2</sup> *migrants*<sup>3</sup> arrived to our continent from one hundred countries. 400,000<sup>4</sup> people went across Hungary, causing many problems in the process.

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<sup>1</sup> Dániel Solymári, Lajos Győri-Dani, *Gondoskodó kíséret: A Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat szerepvállalása a migrációs krízis 2015-ös időszakában* [english translation: Caring escort – The role of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service in the period of the migration crisis in 2015], Budapest, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> \*\*\*, “Statistic explained, Migration and migrant population statistics”, *Eurostat*, March 2019, URL: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration\\_and\\_migrant\\_population\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics), accessed on 12.08.2019.

<sup>3</sup> A.N.: The word *immigrant* will be used deliberately, the word *migrant* is overused in politics, *refugee* is probably the best term because, as it turns out above, fleeing can be due to natural disaster, overpopulation, war, or livelihood reasons, the latter of which being called economic immigrants.

<sup>4</sup> János Besenyő, Péter Miletics, Balázs Orbán, *Európa és a migráció*, Budapest, Zrínyi Kiadó, 2019.



Unfortunately, Hungary is in such a geographic position that the route of mass migrations of the Middle Ages passed also through this country, the same as today. For the people from the East and Middle East this is the easiest way, for those who come from Africa through the Mediterranean Sea is more practical. The majority of these migrants aimed Germany or Western Europe, but a great number went to the Scandinavian countries.<sup>5</sup> More than 1 million people arrived in Germany, because the country was willing to host them, as far as their leadership communication indicated. Today, the situation is different as there are some problems with the resettlement migrants' integration. Germany was the loudest to declare that Europe should take in these people and it is surely possible to integrate<sup>6</sup> these masses, regardless of their original continent and culture. Of course, the transporter of the modern-day mass migration is a group of people of approximately 20-40 members, who make a huge profit out of it, not mentioning what a great moral damage they cause among women and children. We can say that, in many cases, it constitutes the definition of human trafficking<sup>7</sup>.

## 2. Why do They Start their Migration?

There are many theories regarding this question. There are tons of documents that the Arab Spring<sup>8</sup> is the reason for it: in 2011, people from many Arabic countries started to migrate, there were countries where people overthrew the government (e.g. Libya, Egypt, Yemen), in some states there were violent changes of government, but in some there were only oppositional protests, whereas there were countries where civil war broke out (e.g. Syria, Iraq). That is why many people named the ones entering Europe as *refugees of the Syrian war*. We cannot

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<sup>5</sup> Árpád Péter Harmat, "Miért pont most? A migráns áradat háttérökai", [english translation: Why right now? Backgrounds of the Migrant Flood], in *Világesemények Blog*, 10.09.2015, URL: [https://vilagesemenyek.blog.hu/2015/09/10/miert\\_pont\\_most\\_a\\_migrans\\_aradat\\_hatterokai](https://vilagesemenyek.blog.hu/2015/09/10/miert_pont_most_a_migrans_aradat_hatterokai), accessed on 12.08.2019.

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<sup>7</sup> János Besenyő, "The Islamic State and its human trafficking practice", *Strategic Impact Journal*, No. 3/2016, p.60, URL: [http://cssas.unap.ro/en/pdf\\_periodicals/si60.swf](http://cssas.unap.ro/en/pdf_periodicals/si60.swf), accessed on 12.08.2019.

<sup>8</sup> Blitz Daan, *The Arab Spring: A parsimonious explanation of recent contentious politics*, Master Thesis Political Science, Radboud University Nijmegen, 2014, URL: [https://theses.ubn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/123456789/1120/Blitz%2C\\_Daan\\_1.pdf?sequence=1](https://theses.ubn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/123456789/1120/Blitz%2C_Daan_1.pdf?sequence=1), accessed on 12.08.2019.



deny that many Syrian refugees were among the migrators, but, unfortunately, the majority were non-Syrians. Natural disaster is not among the migrating reasons today, but overpopulation is an acceptable reason that explains the phenomenon.<sup>9</sup> Overpopulation on Earth is about to be reached, half of the world's population lives in misery and extreme poverty, the huge megacities are attracting those who want hard physical jobs. They move to these cities with the hope of finding a job that can provide better living conditions. But many of them end up in a slum and there is often no way out. The world's big cities are already overpopulated; they are not able to provide better living conditions. Although people call the ancient slave systems and Middle Ages feudal systems inhuman, if we look closely in the modern-day social conditions, we see bigger horror. Of course, we have reached the conclusion that the root causes of mass migration are financial problems, civil wars and overpopulation.

### 3. What Can We Do?

According to forecasts, population growth will not stop, that is why population movements cannot be stopped, but, instead, they can be managed by citizens themselves and by other type of institutions. For example, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta was founded because of a mass migration wave. In 1989, the Germans who were living in the GDR, because of the unacceptable circumstances of that time, wanted to move to the West Germany, and the only possible way to get there was through Hungary.<sup>10</sup> That time the newly set up Maltese Aid Service took the supply of the approximately 50,000 East Germans who got stuck here. This organization has international connections and takes part in almost every problem-solving action in the world. If we have a look of its international activities, we can see that it has been active for 15 years in Asia, Middle East and Africa<sup>11</sup>. Thus, it is clear that this organization could not avoid taking part in solving the 2015 situation, because its constitution requires it. "This Aid feels empathy towards the humanitarian crisis, so it sees deprived people in the refugees. The abandoned who lost or gave up their family, community, home and homeland, the essential elements of their life. This could happen from own will, but it has always a good reason. In most cases, severe problems force people

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<sup>9</sup> \*\*\*, "Overpopulation of the Earth", *Global Problems – Multimedia Note*, 31.05.2011, URL: <http://globalproblems.nyf.hu/globalis-problema/a-fold-tulnepesedese>, accessed on 12.08.2019.

<sup>10</sup> \*\*\*, "History of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service", *Hungarian Maltese Charity Service*, URL: <https://maltai.hu/mmsztortenete>, accessed on 12.08.2019.

<sup>11</sup> Dániel Solymári, Lajos Győri-Dani, Gondoskodó kíséret, "A Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat szerepvállalása a migrációs krízis 2015-ös időszakában" [english translation: Caring Escort: The Role of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service in the Migration Crisis 2015], Budapest, 2016, pp. 60-61.





to such decisions. The uncertainty of the future and the feeling of estrangement in the World requires help even for the strongest.”<sup>12</sup> The writer of these lines defined almost the *ars poetica* of the Maltese Aid Service. In 2015, this organization activated more than 500 volunteers and colleagues to support the migrants passing through the country. The supply service was organized in 15 different places and in many ways. Budapest, Hegyeshalom, Rösztke, Horgos, Mórahalom, Mohács, Magyarbóly, Sid (Serbia), Tavornik (Croatia), Opatovac (Croatia), Barcs, Zákány, Letenye, Szentgotthárd, Körmend, Győr – these are the places where the volunteers and colleagues of the organization provided health care services, food and clothes. The defence of the faith and help of the poor (*Tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum*) inspire the organization to do its best for helping those in need. The health care services were ensured by its Mobile Medical Center, where volunteer doctors helped. This service was really important for women and children, and if they found severe problems, they transported them to the hospital. Distributing food and clothes was also important. In the entry and leaving checkpoints there were groups of migrants who waited and they were provided with food, mostly sandwiches, fruits, tea, coffee and mineral water. And if some of the migrants needed clothes, they received clothes as well. This resembles to the activity of the Order of chivalry in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, because they had provided the supply, the security service and some of the medical service of the pilgrims in the same way. According to the statements of the organization’s employees, they left these 24 hours shifts with mixed feelings. There were helpers who had good feelings about it, but, unfortunately, there were also volunteers who had bad experiences. “After receiving the sandwich, in one hand he held the food, and with the other he showed that he will cut my throat”. And, these actions were undertaken, mostly, by young men. For many volunteers it was strange that these migrants, with a totally different culture, first allowed the men to receive the supplies and only after they got full, they would allow women and children have their food and other provisions. It was also absurd that men’s clothes were never incomplete, only women and children’s clothes were so. The helpers often saw barefoot children in cold autumn days. It was heartbreaking to see how women and children stood in the background, this is not acceptable for a Christian with different cultural background. So, it is understandable that these situations would be inexplicable for most Europeans. The above mentioned mentality means a great threat to our European mindset because the “liberty, equality, fraternity” way of thinking is fed to us with mother’s milk and we do not want to change it. The solidarity of liberal thinkers cannot allow to change the European freedom of religion and the equality of women and children, just because, by referring to solidarity, they allow the penetration of a culture into

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 40.



Europe, customary law and practices which threaten these values. Of course, the civil organizations cannot be classified as one. There are some National-Christian organizations, which contribute to the development of things, such as “Samaritan” organizations, and there are some civil organizations that are anti-national and anti-Christian and following some liberal and supranational values. They are usually founded by certain power aspirations.

We are facing many hardships. Those civil organizations which identify themselves with the teachings of Christianity, could not do anything else but what *the love of the neighbor* imperative requires. Do what you want others to do to you, so love and dignity of human beings is the first principle. Although we know that some cultures, religions are intolerant of others and they expect the host country to adapt to their habits and culture. If their mindset would not be so extremely exclusionary, the integration would be easier.

The condition of the civilian population and their attitude toward the border guard and law enforcement forces performing the tasks is a key factor in the proper handling of different crisis situations, conflict-free or with minimal conflict.<sup>13</sup> People living in the communities directly affected by the migration crisis experience different events happening in their environment, in many cases even on their own property. As a result, they treat migrants as well as the police and military units policing the borders and involved in crisis management differently than those who are merely remote observers of events. We consider the detailed and spatially focused study of this to be an important research topic because domestic research on irregular migration is mostly based on a nationally representative sample, and is therefore not, or only to a limited extent, capable of providing reliable information on a smaller territorial unit. The aim of the study is to analyze migration attitudes and their changes in the border settlements of Csongrad County directly affected by the 2015 migration crisis. In our study, we show how people who live in areas directly affected by the crisis have the sympathy, rejection or solidarity of those who do not live there and are not part of the events. A further aim of our analysis is to showcase explanations, interpretations and motivations behind the quantitative data, during which, based on qualitative and quantitative data collection, we present the changes in the attitudes of people living in the Southern Great Plain border of Hungary towards migrants, their causes, as well as the public opinion on the work of the Hungarian Defence Forces and the police.

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<sup>13</sup> A.N.: On the importance of successful defence of sovereignty and the importance of the relationship between the people and the armed forces are discussed in detail in his book: Péter Kiss Álmos, *Háború a nép között*, Zrínyi Publisher, Budapest, 2016.



#### 4. Fieldwork

Analyses of migration and beliefs about migrants most often discuss the phenomenon and attitudes related to it using the words “intolerance”, “xenophobia” and, sometimes, even the term “hatred”. These terms were conceptualized in the surveys – most often questionnaires – that serve as the basis of these analyses as to label those with the aforementioned words who have, to some extent, provided negative answers to those questions<sup>14</sup> that tackled the opinions regarding the migration and migrants in the country.<sup>15</sup> These analyses – within this conceptual definition, of course – point to the fact that the Hungarian society is explicitly anti-immigration and anti-refugee<sup>16</sup>. The purpose of quantitative research elements is often not to increase the level of measurement reliability of concepts, but to demonstrate the research ability of the topic in question and the data analyzability<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, one of the main aims of our research is to explore the deeper cause-and-effect relationships behind the generalizing statements.

Our research was carried out in two phases in the settlements directly affected by the migration crisis, to be more specific in the three settlements of Csongrad County, bordering Serbia, namely: Ásotthalom, Mórahalom, and Rösztke. The purpose of the first phase, the qualitative phase, during which we have conducted interviews,<sup>18</sup> was to be able to formulate questions of high validity for the subsequent quantitative (questionnaire) research phase. In the unstructured interviews we have conducted, we did not direct the interviewees, but rather asked only one opening question, and then let the respondents express their views and form groups themselves on the research topic. For these interviews, the relevant information for us concerned the aspects of the grouping of key information related to the phenomenon under study, and what terms with what meaning are locally used to discuss the topic.

Subsequently, based on the results of the interviews and previous surveys conducted on similar topics by others, we have prepared our second (quantitative) questionnaire, which was surveyed on a random sample of 300 people representative in the three settlements.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> A.N.: Quantitative research makes most of the mistakes not during data collection or analysis, but earlier when formulating questions and defining the scope of data to be collected (Letenyey-Rácz 2010).

<sup>15</sup> A.N.: See e.g. Simonovits-Bernát (Editor), *The Social Aspects of the 2015 Migration Crisis in Hungary*, Budapest, March 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Tamás Wetzsel, *A bevándorlás kérdése Magyarországon*, Publikon, 2011, pp. 26,135.

<sup>17</sup> László Letenyey, Attila Rácz, in *Roma Kutatások*, Erika Kurucz (Editor), 2010, *Élethelyzetek a társadalom peremén*. Nemzeti Család- és Szociálpolitikai Intézet, 2011, URL: [http://www.ncsszi.hu/download.php?file\\_id=1920](http://www.ncsszi.hu/download.php?file_id=1920), accessed on 12.08.2019.

<sup>18</sup> A.N.: 21 interviews were conducted between December 2015 and January 2016 among the civilian population and those working in the public administration.

<sup>19</sup> A.N.: The sampling frame and the number of sample units were determined with the professional support of the Central Statistical Office.



## 5. Conceptual Frames

The proper name of the phenomenon itself and its participants has long been a topic of debate among migration researchers, in the public debate on the migration crisis, in press and in politics.

Due to the problem of definition – that is, validity – the first thing we had to find out was that in the research field where we were going to apply a questionnaire survey, how to formulate our questions so that everyone understood the same thing. Among those living along the southern border, *irregular* (mass) *migration*, which according to migration researchers is the correct term, is not used at all. In the field, the terms “immigrant”, “migrant” or “refugee” are commonly used to describe the phenomenon, meaning the same in terms of people who do not cross the state border legally, regardless of whether they come individually or in groups, or why they left their countries of origin. Thus, during the research, we have also formulated our questions accordingly and, therefore, did not distinguish between the concepts that otherwise have different meanings in the language experts use.

During the interviews, opinions were grouped on five key topics related to irregular migration:

1. The temporal occurrence and evolution of irregular migration (since when)
2. The changes in attitudes towards migrants (how the attitude has changed)
3. The decline in subjective sense of security (what it has caused)
4. The border policing activities of the Police (what it has taken)
5. The appearance of the Hungarian Defence Forces and management of the situation (how to deal with it).

Some of the questions of quantitative data collection were later elaborated on the basis of these aspects, which were revealed in the interview research phase, while the others examined the phenomenon by taking into consideration questions of similar research done by others before, in order to detect spatial differences and changes in the time series.

## 6. Occurrence of Irregular Migration in the Parts of Csongrad County Bordering Serbia

Irregular migration as a phenomenon had become noticeable in the three settlements of the Csongrád County border section not in 2015, but much earlier. The majority of those living there (40.4%) only met migrants, for the first time, in 2014, but the recall of migrants’ emergence is set between 1990 and 2016.

A significant increase in the perception of the phenomenon can be observed for the first time in the year 2012. According to interviewees, only smaller “genuine refugee” looking groups arrived before 2012, followed by “larger black African



groups”, in 2012, but smaller non-black groups were also continuously arriving. The migration phenomenon reached the level of the examined border section in 2012, when it started to cause concern among the people living there. The different stages of the period between the onset of the migration crisis (according to those living in the southern border section, in 2012) and its peak (September 2015), can be linked to the emergence of different ethnic groups. Migration pressures became “unbearable” in the border settlements, in September 2014, with the arrival of “refugees” from Kosovo. This wave of migration from Kosovo was the one that made the pre-existing problem “spectacular”. There would be a strong negative perception of locals about migrants from Kosovo. This negative image was primarily related to the behavior and emergence of the “new refugees”. “The Kosovars (on the one hand) did not behave or look like real refugees” (meaning: poorly dressed, non-European looking, formerly seen and “accustomed to” by locals), on the other hand, they were “irresponsible”, often traversing the green borderline in out-of-season clothing, many times endangering the lives of infants and young children. Arrivals from Kosovo were typically formed of whole families, while Middle Eastern and Black African migrants were typically males only. However, unlike previous refugee groups, Kosovars have already “appeared to arrive at the border in an organized manner”. In February 2015, standby police forces arrived at the border, and at about the same time, in March, the number of Kosovars dropped to almost zero, while the migratory wave itself did not slow down but continued to increase with arrivals from other countries.

## 7. Changing Attitudes Towards Migrants

Among the Hungarian researches on migrants, we found data on how many of the interviewed people met with migrants, in the surveys of TÁRKI<sup>20</sup> and the Department of Sociology at the University of Szeged. The proportion of those who met refugees in the national representative survey of TÁRKI<sup>21</sup>, conducted in 2015, in the previous 12 months was 27%<sup>22</sup>, in the Szeged 2016 survey 80%,<sup>23</sup> and in the border region we examined 92%.

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<sup>20</sup> A.N.: Táarki’s analysis concludes that there are conflicting attitudes, between those who have “only” met refugees or migrants and those who personally know such people. People who do not personally know immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers - that is to say, have just met them - are more likely to be rejecting and have a higher-than-average level of fear (Bernát et al., 2015).

<sup>21</sup> Bori Simonovits (Editor), “Attitudes Towards Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants First results”, October, *Tárki Social Research Institute*, Budapest, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> A.N.: The rate we calculated based on the graph in the referenced analysis.

<sup>23</sup> \*\*\*, “Many Szegeders are locking themselves away when it comes to the reception of refugees”, *Szegedma.hu*, 16.06.2016, URL: <http://szegedma.hu/hir/szeged/2016/06/sok-szegedi-elzarkozik-ha-a-menekultek-befogadasa-a-kerdes.html>, accessed on 12.08.2019.



During the first encounters, in the initial phase of irregular migration (1990-2012), the population was characterized by compassion and helping behavior. Our interviews also show that border authorities and civilians had been practically abandoned before September 2015, before the peak of the crisis, until the emergence of national and international media, even though they had previously signaled the increase in migration pressure on their settlements, and the problems that came with it.

During this period, the provision of migrants had been self-sustained, cooperative with the public and local governments, and it had remained so until the migration wave reached its peak and received more media coverage. Only then did different – not local – NGOs assisting migrants emerge in the area and, due to the increasing media presence, received more publicity than local organizations or local governments. The supportive behavior of the locals, characteristic of the early phases before the climax of the crisis – which was invisible to the general public in the absence of media coverage because of its lack of news value –, later became increasingly distancing and, with the emergence of the chaotic situation, and due to the need to restore order and a sense of security, became increasingly rejecting of migrants and migration. One reason for this change in attitudes is the large, unsupervised, and uncontrolled arrival of migrants in the settlements, which aliens crowd, due to its demographic composition (most of them young men), its being ill-equipped and its behavioral deviation from local cultural habits<sup>24</sup>, has made the local population increasingly hostile and even more fearful.

### **8. Decrease in Subjective Sense of Security**

A 2014 questionnaire survey has already shown that 47% of those surveyed in Rösztke and Horgos found that immigrants staying in a particular settlement for a long time would create conflicts between locals and migrants. Although the results of the two surveys can only be compared to a limited extent due to the difference in events and territorial delineation, they are showing that the distribution of answers to a similar question we asked in 2016, shows a dramatic increase in the number of people who fear conflict, rising to 84.3%, in May 2016.<sup>25</sup>

One of the reasons for the feeling of danger and the increase in fear is the lack of adequate care for migrants, as the large number of uncontrolled and ill-equipped groups constantly gathering to the green border have often tried to obtain needed supplies from the locals (food, water, cell phone charging etc., as well as

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<sup>24</sup> Szilveszter Póczik, “Nemzetközi migráció, biztonságpolitika, biztonság”, in *Migrációs tendenciák napjainkban Publikon Kiadó*, Pécs, pp. 101–132, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> A.N.: In Rösztke this proportion was 87.1% in 2016 (93% in Ásotthalom and 77.2% in Mórahalom). However, the breakdown by municipality does no longer serve as representative result.





shelter), which, in some cases, have led to conflicts. It could be because of this that, in the 12 months preceding our May-June 2016 survey, 41% of respondents had felt threatened.<sup>26</sup> There is also a statistically justifiable relationship between the frequency of the feeling of danger in two groups, respectively, women and those living in the periphery, who felt more at risk than men or residents in the center. Almost one in two women (49%), but almost one third of men as well, experienced some form of fear exerted by migrants, between May 2015 and May-June 2016.

People in the outskirts were more likely to be exposed to situations that created a sense of danger than those living in more central, urban areas.

Of the factors influencing everyday life and reducing the sense of security of the population, the appearance of human traffickers was the most disturbing (65.4%), followed by the movement of migrants (58.4%), and the migrants' emergence (56.4%), and behavior issues with a frequency of 42.8%.

The organized transportation of migrants and the emergence of human traffickers were first visible to the population during the migrants wave arriving from Kosovo. Following the wave of Kosovar arrivals, organized refugee transportation continued to be noticeable and visible to the locals. The difference was only in the fact that other nations came to the border in an organized manner. Two groups of migrants were clearly distinguished on the basis of their strategy for crossing the border: one was the "group of day-time arrivals", including families who did not refuse to register, the other group being the night-time forbidden border crossers, who were mostly men and headed to "hidden in the woods" to a predetermined meeting point where human traffickers were waiting for them.

The answers to the questionnaire also indicate uncertainty about the controllability and proper management of the situation. More than one-third (34.3%) of respondents think that immigration in Hungary has become completely out of control, but overall, this figure is close to two-thirds (73.4%), if we add those who only partly agree. At the time of the October 2015 survey, in the Visegrád countries, 62% in Hungary, 69% in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and 52% in Poland agreed with the statement<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> A.N.: There may be a legitimate methodological problem that the answers to a question in this form may, in principle, include other situations not directly related to migration that the respondent may have been feeling in danger of, but otherwise these situations have nothing to do with irregular migration. This can, however, be ruled out, as the questionnaire's subsequent open-ended question only provided answers describing the migration situation.

<sup>27</sup> A. Bernát et al., *Attitudes towards refugees, asylum seekers and migrants*, Budapest, Tárki, 2015, URL: [http://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2015/kitekint/20151203\\_refugee.pdf](http://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2015/kitekint/20151203_refugee.pdf), accessed on 12.07.2016.



## 9. The Role of the Hungarian Defence Forces in Border Policing and its Public Perception

87.1% of the inhabitants of the three settlements in question agreed with the installation of the physical border barrier<sup>28</sup> and 96% supported the participation of the Hungarian Defence Forces in border police activities.

The patrols' emergence "had a reassuring effect on the population with the sight of armed soldiers" and increased the subjective sense of security in the settlements.

After a long time, the civilian population was able to see Hungarian soldiers returning to duty in September 2015, when the Hungarian Defence Forces were commanded to deal with the migration crisis. As a matter of fact, the public perception of the Hungarian Defence Forces had been decreasing starting with 1991, due to the fact that, on the one hand, for the general public, military security had fallen to the third place behind social and public security, and on the other hand, the civilian population did not or, very rarely, met soldiers on duty.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, if citizens see what the military do and that its usefulness to society has not diminished, then the society's perception on the soldiers might improve. This is supported by the differences between the national<sup>30</sup> and the representative data of the action area (Ásotthalom, Mórahalom, Rösztke). Overall, the proportion of those satisfied with the activities of the Defence Forces in preventing illegal immigration is more than two-thirds (75% national, 85.9% action area), however, more than half of those living in the action area, while only a quarter of those living in the country, are fully satisfied with the military's border policing activities. Upon examination of the regional differences, it can be seen that the proportion of those who state that they cannot form an opinion on the issue is higher (by almost 10 percentage points).

Another important segment of the population's opinion on the defence forces is the confidence in the defence capabilities of the armed forces, which is also influenced by what they saw during the fulfillment of their tasks - equipment, military technology, organization, execution etc.

The results show that people living in the area (action area) directly affected by irregular migration, where the Defence Forces carried out border police operations,

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<sup>28</sup> A.N.: This proportion is 80% according to a national representative survey conducted by the Migration Research Institute also in May-June 2016. URL: <http://www.migraciokutato.hu/en/2016/07/12/kozvelemenykutatas-series-a-migracio-tarsadalmi-megiteleserol-i/>, accessed on 12.07.2016.

<sup>29</sup> A.N.: The resulting negative public perception can result in the soldiers' self-esteem deteriorating (Vámosi 1997:12, quoted in Róth 2005:5). And if the soldiers themselves consider their activities to be useless and inferior, they will lead to a deterioration of their service and living conditions, to the abandonment of their careers, and ultimately to the decline of their military capabilities.

<sup>30</sup> A.N.: The source of the national data is the telephone survey of 1000 persons conducted by Nézőpont Intézet on 1-5 February 2016.



are more confident that the Hungarian Defence Forces can guarantee the country's security in a migration crisis.

### Conclusions

One of the main conclusions of the survey of the attitudes of the civilian population directly affected by the migration crisis is that people reject mass uncontrolled migration along practical, tangible, everyday aspects and experiences, similarly to the position of the Hungarian society as a whole on migration.

Rejection of migration is not directed against migrants, that is, against certain nations, ethnicities, ethnic groups, or people, but against the uncontrolled effects of the process, which give rise to subjective and security risks.

92% of respondents have personal experiences regarding the migrants, which, by 2016, was essentially negative.

Mass uncontrolled migration and the accompanying conflict situations and atrocities create fear and a feeling of danger among the population of the border settlements.

Besides arresting or halting migrants with a border lock or barrier (fence), there is also a large majority in favor of the involvement of the military in border control tasks.

The involvement and presence of the army in border policing has a reassuring effect on the subjective sense of security of those living along the border.

The appearance of the military and its visibility in the course of its task provokes positive attitudes in the civilian population and it has a positive effect on the social image of the military profession.

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# THE EVOLUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATIC CHANGES IN THE ARCTIC

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*The current international system faces a new form of risks and threats generated by climate change, the results following the increase of global temperature which managed to influence the the states' conduct. Following this phenomenon, which caused the withdrawal of the polar ice cap, one of the most affected regions is the Arctic area. The changes that have appeared in the region of the polar territories support access to new resources and the emergence of a new maritime route, which have triggered many new implications from many international actors in the development of the area. In the context of the latest evolutions, within the current literature, a new hypothesis began to draw its lines linked to the formation of a regional security complex. Many of the arguments of the hypothesis are linked to the violent actions of Russia to protect and exploit the Arctic theories.*

**Keywords:** *climatic changes; security complex; natural resources; exploitation; the Arctic; Russian Federation.*

## Introduction

We are currently witnessing the configuration of a dynamic and complex international system, influenced by a new type of risks as a direct result of the progress the mankind and the international system have been registering. One phenomenon that began to have a bigger impact upon the current international

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system is represented by the climate change which has been increasingly affecting regions of the Earth, influencing the conduct of many international actors.

Because of the melting of the Arctic's ice cap the consequences of these changes in the actions of the international actors' activities in the area are starting to show. Amongst these international actors, the Russian Federation has been standing out the most. In the latest years, the Russian state has become increasingly involved, through specific actions such as expeditions, military exercises and large-scale energy projects.

Russia has manifested an active involvement in this region, beginning to identify it, in its latest strategies, with one of the regions of strategic importance for its development. These events can determine the problem of research, respectively the method in which the changes in the arctic territories influence the current international system and the conduct of a state, such as the Russian Federation.

The research objectives are aimed at identifying the impact that these climatic changes have upon the international system, through the possibility of a new regional security complex, but also upon the conduct of an international actor, such as the Russian Federation.

The questions of the research: *Can the international system and the conduct of the states still be influenced by geography in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Can climate change influence the international relations dynamics? What about the conduct of a state such as the Russian Federation? What is the reasoning behind the actions of the Russian Federation in the Arctic?*

The research hypothesis starts from the idea that the rapid changes in the Arctic influence the international system's dynamic and the conduct of the international actors.

## **1. The Evolution of the International System and Geography's Impact upon It**

Currently, we are assisting to the configuration of a new, more dynamic and more complex international system as it has never been in history. This is the result of the latest evolutions, both the systematic nature of the international relations and the technologic progress registered by mankind in the past decades, that leading to the emergence of global impact phenomena, such as globalization and climate change.

The basic characteristics of the current international system represent the result of the evolution throughout the centuries, from 1648 to present. Each step of its evolution, proving relevant, is formulated by a great power, which endowed it with new values and principles. The first important phase in the history of international relations, that was defining for the future international system, was





caused by 17<sup>th</sup> century France, introducing the idea of *nation-state*, formulating policies according to national interest. The second important phase is represented by the introduction of the concept of *balance of power*. The term was introduced by the United Kingdom in the eighteenth century, managing to maintain Europe stable for approximatively 200 years.<sup>1</sup>

In the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Austria tried to maintain the stability on the European continent by creating a European unity. However, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Germany destroyed Europe's unity by formulating a new model of foreign policy based on the policy of power (*realpolitik*), model that would lead to the launch of two world wars, in the next century.<sup>2</sup>

The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was dominated by two world conflagrations, favoring the ascension of the United States and the Soviet Union. The two great powers would formulate a new stage in the history of international relations, based on a bipolar international system, dominated by two superpowers, which would face each other in every corner of the world, to divide the spheres of influence. Following this confrontation, the United States proved to be superior to the Soviet Union, managing to influence the international system the most, by introducing the concept of liberalization. The concept was continuously perfected by the Americans, at national level, and then exported it internationally, therefore, managing at the end of the Cold War to contribute to the formulation of a new unipolar international system.<sup>3</sup>

At the end of this phase, the United States remained the only international actor which fulfilled all the characteristics of a superpower from an economic, politic and military point of view. All the elements proved to be insufficient in the new world order, when, after a long period of time, the United States were attacked on its own territory, on September 11, 2001. The event represented the consequence of the new world order, upon which the liberalization favorized the accession of new emerging powers. The evolution, along with the phenomena of globalization and the technologic progress, had a major impact, amplifying the international anarchy and changing the current international system in an extremely complex and impossible to control multipolar system.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Geography's influence on the current international system and the behavior of major actors***

In spite of the major changes that took place throughout the centuries, the features of the current international system can be defined and understood the

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, Bucharest, All Publishing House, 2010, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 18-24.



easiest through the lens of the realist school of thought. As this theory explains, the state has remained the main international actor that continues to manifest an egoist conduct on the international scene, driven by its own interests. Due to this fact, each state's actions are based on its own interests, because there was no international authority to govern them, which has led to the current world order still being dominated by international anarchy.<sup>5</sup>

The states' egoist conduct is driven by their need for survival, as the realist theory explains. To assure survival, each state needs a range of fundamental resources, identified by George Friedman as being imperative, such as: food, water and shelter. Under the umbrella of the *imperative* term, are resources that move the society, such as petroleum, natural gas, coal and much more. These imperatives are limited and determined for every state by their geography, fact that determines the need of interaction with the other states. Due to the limitation of the resources, it is impossible that each state assures the needed imperatives, being one of the reasons why the conduct of the states is selfish. By understanding the necessary imperatives, the conduct of the states can be better anticipated and determined, to the detriment of the statements of political decision makers.<sup>6</sup>

As a consequence of the insufficient resources provided by geography, the actions of states are determined and limited, which causes their need to accumulate power to ensure their survival. Therefore, at the level of the world order, there is a tendency of polarizing power, leading to the emergence of centers of power that determine its character. At present times, due to the post-Cold War evolutions, which amplified the anarchy between the states and determined the formation of a multipower international system, such a pole of power occurs in every region, trying to dominate it, leading to a multiplication of power poles. Despite the emergence of global phenomena, such as globalization, we are witnessing the formation of regional security complexes, each pole of power coming to fight to achieve the imperatives necessary for survival in the area where it is located.<sup>7</sup>

The regional security complex represents an international subsystem, consisting of two or more actors that are part of the same region (because the threats are spread easier on short distances). Also, the relationship between the involved actors is marked by interdependency from the point of view of shared risks, causing it to be durable and profound or even permanent (depending on the

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<sup>5</sup> Joshua S. Goldstein, Jon C. Pevehouse, *International Relations*, Bucharest, Publisher Polirom, 2008, pp. 95-97.

<sup>6</sup> George Friedman, "Understanding Our Geopolitical Model", in *Geopolitical Futures*, 28.12.2015, URL: <https://geopoliticalfutures.com/understanding-our-geopolitical-model-works/>, accessed on 25.04.2020.

<sup>7</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde, *Security*, Publisher CA Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2011, pp. 23-26.



addressed problem).<sup>8</sup>

In the case of the challenges caused by geography, that mostly surface at a national level, through the regional security complex theory, a risk or a threat that the current international system faces can be better explained. The security complex theory identifies a series of regional subsystems as the subject of the analysis, thus offering an overview of the evolution regarding a specific problem, having the state standing as a reference. In spite of the global interdependency, the risks and the threats occur in the limited geographical areas of the states, at the regional level, representing one of the reasons why the insecurity is associated, in most cases, with proximity. Therefore, the security complex represents a group of states, sharing a series of common challenges and are interconnected in a way in which they cannot be assessed or settled separately.<sup>9</sup>

Depending on the relation of the states situated in the security complex, at the international system level, there have been identified three types of complexes: the conflict – it occurs out of the fear and the rivalry of the involved actors; the security regime – the actors are viewed as being the first potential enemies, but they have concluded a series of agreements in order to reduce the security dilemma between them; the pluralist community of security – the states do not view themselves as being threats to their own security.<sup>10</sup>

The amplification of the international anarchy, caused by the liberalization of the international system determined the dynamic of the current system in the context of the regional security complexes. The factor according to which a regional security complex can be evaluated is represented by its structure, which consists of three elements: the way in which the actors are arranged; the type of friendship or rivalry relations; the distribution of power between the actors involved. Any major change to each of the structural elements identified above implies the modification of the security complex.<sup>11</sup>

In understanding a security issue, which can have a global impact, the theory of the regional security complex represents the most appropriate tool to address a problem at a regional level. This level's analysis represents the space where the states interact the most and the place where events that can influence the international system take place. With the help of the regional security complex theory, the impact of a threat can be defined by identifying the structure of the analyzed complex.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 27.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 28.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 29.



## 2. The Climate Change Impact on the Current International System

The current international system is more complex and more dynamic, which can cause the occurrence of new risks and threats which can degenerate in crises and conflicts, if not managed properly. Due to the complexity of the new challenges, the literature has identified five main sectors: economic, political, military, social and environmental, according to the interactions between the actors. One of the examples would be the occurrence of a risk that can have as its source the environmental sector, and if not controlled properly, it can degenerate and affect one or more sectors in a ripple effect. All of this became possible due to two important factors: the international system's evolution and the technological progress.<sup>12</sup>

The technological progress throughout the latest decades is responsible for the unprecedented accelerated development amplified by the globalization phenomenon that interconnects the whole world. All of this became achievable with the use of fossil fuels such as oil, natural gas and coal, managing to put the world in movement for the last two centuries or so. The vast applicability of these fuels determines their usage at a large scale, fact that bought new risks ahead.<sup>13</sup>

The source of this problem is represented by the greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, resulting from the burning of fossil fuels. The greenhouse gas accumulated more and more in the atmosphere, exceeding the planet natural cycle's capacity of absorption and managing to affect the delicate balance of the global climate. This fact was scientifically explained as the direct result of the human activity within the last two centuries, linked to the carbon dioxide concentration level in the atmosphere. Global warming represents the accelerated increase of the average temperature at the surface of the Earth.<sup>14</sup>

This phenomenon was proved through the research of the carbon dioxide concentration level of the polar ice cap's layers, the sediments left on the bottom of the oceans and the layers of sedimentary rocks. Based on these studies, a part of the heating and cooling patterns that the planet had throughout millions of years were carried out. One of the most important discoveries is the fact that the planet has gone through warming cycles, but at a much slower pace. Based on the studies, in the last 5000 years, the average global temperature had risen between four and seven degrees Celsius. In the last thousand years, an increasing of the global temperature of 0.7 degrees Celsius has been registered, thus confirming that this

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>13</sup> \*\*\*, "World", in *CIA World Factbook*, URL: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/xx.html>, accessed on 27.05.2020.

<sup>14</sup> \*\*\*, "Global Warming", in *NASA Earth Observatory*, 03.06.2010, URL: <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/GlobalWarming/page2.php>, accessed on 27.05.2020.



process increased ten times more than in the past. The existing patterns expect, for the next century, an increase of the temperature between 2 and 6 degrees Celsius, registering a rate up to twenty times faster than the normal one.<sup>15</sup>

According to the latest studies upon the factors that amplify global warming, in the last twenty years there has not been any progress in reducing the emissions of greenhouse gas. Over the last two decades an increase of the carbon dioxide level has been registered due to the fact that more than 80% of the energy generated globally is produced using fossil fuels.<sup>16</sup> The situation is so critical that 193 states signed the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, by which they pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The document imposes a 2° Celsius increase limit which, if surpassed, can have severe and irreversible consequences.<sup>17</sup> According to these estimates, the global average temperature is rising.

The intense usage of hydrocarbons proved to have a major impact on the global climate caused in the atmosphere by the emissions of greenhouse gases. One of the most challenging situations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is represented by the changes suffered in the climate. Globally, these changes proved to be the triggering factor of the global warming phenomenon. These changes caused many ripple effects, such as: the increasing of the global temperature, warming of the oceans, glacier retreat, the melting of the ice cap, the reduction of the areas covered in snow, rising planetary ocean levels, the retraction of the ice in the Arctic Ocean, increasingly violent weather and ocean acidification.<sup>18</sup>

All the changes produce a series of social consequences that are beneficial in some parts of the globe: a much gentler climate, accessibility to once isolated regions, access to new resources and new waterways. In addition to the benefits, there are also negative effects: droughts, floods that can lead to food shortages, and ultimately degenerate into a new conflict. Both the negative and positive effects mentioned above influence the conduct of international actors.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, we are witnessing the emergence of new challenges in the sphere of the environmental security sector, which have begun to influence the other sectors

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<sup>15</sup> \*\*\*, "How is Today's Warming Different from the Past?", in *NASA Earth Observatory*, 03.06.2010, URL: <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/GlobalWarming/page3.php>, accessed on 27.05.2020.

<sup>16</sup> Ted Nordhaus, "The Two-Degree Delusion", in *Foreign Affairs*, 08.02.2018, URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2018-02-08/two-degree-delusion>, accessed on 27.05.2020.

<sup>17</sup> Ted Nordhaus, "The Truth About the Two-Degree Target", in *Foreign Affairs*, 07.03.2018, URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2018-03-07/truth-about-two-degree-target>, accessed on 27.05.2020.

<sup>18</sup> \*\*\*, "Climate change: How do we know?", in *NASA*, URL: <https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>, accessed on 28.05.2020.

<sup>19</sup> \*\*\*, "The consequences of climate change", in *NASA*, URL: <https://climate.nasa.gov/effects/>, accessed on 28.05.2020.



identified above. Until recently, in the Security Studies domain, the environmental sector was neglected, being approached only at a theoretical level. In the 70s, the possibilities of the implication of the environmental sectors in terms of security were speculated for the first time. Only in the late 80s, serious discussions about the environmental sector and its impact on security took place. In the 90s, possible implications on security, made by environmental degradation, which could lead to political instability or conflict, were considered. These consequences, through the phenomenon of globalization, can cause ripple effects, at the global level. In this way, the environmental sector has come to play an increasingly important role at the same time as the multiplication effects caused by environmental degradation.<sup>20</sup>

Researchers in the field have found a close bond between the resource abundance, environmental security and violence. It has been observed that in many situations where resources have been affected by a natural disaster, things have degenerated into political instability and violence. Therefore, the necessary survival imperatives are closely related to the environmental security sector. Also, in the context of the bond between the resources and the environmental security, the accessibility to new areas which may have deposits of natural resources, following effects caused by climate change, there have been discussions about a possible competition, which can lead to “wars for resources”.<sup>21</sup>

Following the above-mentioned contents, the environmental security sector is closely linked to the conduct of the states, influenced by its ability to affect the abundance of resources in the international system.

### **3. Case Study: the Implications of Climate Change on the Arctic and the Russian Federation**

One of the regions with huge potential, following climatic change, and a new challenge in International Relations is the Arctic. These territories have a great potential, as they are some of the few places untouched by human activity and hold vast deposits of natural resources, new sea routes, new fishing areas, becoming increasingly accessible due to global warming and technological progress.

According to studies on the region, the ice cap in the Arctic Ocean is melting twice as fast as anywhere in the world, with concrete evidence of this trend for the past 30 years. Between 1979 and 2013, the ice-covered area of the Arctic decreased by about 40%, based on assessments of satellite scans. The melting of the ice cap occurs due to the reduction of the white surface, which reflects solar radiation. The dark surface of the ocean has come to absorb more and more radiation, thus

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<sup>20</sup> Paul D. Williams, *Security Studies an Introduction*, New York, Publisher Routledge, 2008, pp. 261-264.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 264-270.





accelerating the reduction of the ice cap. Due to this phenomenon, it is estimated that by 2030, the Arctic Ocean may remain completely ice-free.<sup>22</sup>

In the literature, the Arctic is identified as a region north of the Arctic Circle, which is an imaginary line surrounding the Earth, at latitude 66° 34' N and demarcating the summer solstice, during which the sun remains on the horizon for at least 24 hours, marking the polar day.<sup>23</sup>

On the issue addressed in this current study, the Arctic can be identified as the region around the North Pole, consisting of the Arctic Ocean and its riparian territories in Northern Europe, Asia and North America, up to the demarcation line of the Arctic Circle (latitude line 66° 34' N). The Arctic area is identified by the Arctic Council according to the same criteria. There are five states in the region: the Russian Federation, the United States, Canada, Greenland (Denmark) and Norway.<sup>24</sup>

According to the latest studies in the field of natural resource exploration, in the Arctic there are 1/8 of the world's total oil (90 billion barrels of oil) and 1/4 of the world's natural gas (1,669 trillion cubic meters of natural gas). Currently, 10.5% of oil production and 25.5% of total natural gas production, globally, come from the Arctic territories.<sup>25</sup>

Another important factor, which aroused interest in the region, is represented by two new sea passages, which appeared after the retreat of the ice cap and which can connect America, Europe and Asia. These sea routes are shorter and safer for maritime transport, namely the Northwest Passage of the United States of America and Canada, and the North-East Route Passage (Northern Sea Route) of the Russian Federation. Currently, transportation made through these trade routes has a huge advantage for the development of nearby areas, which is why it attracts the interest of the riparian states in the region and other states outside this area.<sup>26</sup>

The potential of the area has attracted the involvement of the following states: the Russian Federation, Norway, Denmark (Greenland), Canada and the United States, but also international actors, such as China, South Korea, Japan and India.

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas F. Stocker, Dahe Qin (coord.), *Climate Change 2013 - The Physical Science Basis*, New York, Publisher Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 323-330.

<sup>23</sup> \*\*\*, "What is the Arctic?", in *National Snow & Ice Data Center*, 04.05.2020, URL: <https://nsidc.org/cryosphere/arctic-meteorology/arctic.html>, accessed on 29.05.2020.

<sup>24</sup> George Fiedman, "Toward a Geopolitics of the Arctic", in *Geopolitical Futures*, 03.08.2017, URL: <https://geopoliticalfutures.com/toward-geopolitics-arctic/>, accessed on 29.05.2020.

<sup>25</sup> \*\*\*, "Circum-Arctic Resource Appraisal: Estimates of Undiscovered Oil and Gas North of the Arctic Circle", in *United States Geological Survey*, 03.07.2008, URL: <https://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2008/3049/fs2008-3049.pdf>, accessed on 29.05.2020.

<sup>26</sup> Scott G. Borgerson, "The Emerging Arctic", in *Council on Foreign Relations*, 25.03.2014, URL: [https://www.cfr.org/interactives/emerging-arctic?cid=otr\\_marketing\\_use-arctic\\_Infoguide%2523#!#/emerging-arctic?cid=otr\\_marketing\\_use-arctic\\_Infoguide%2523!](https://www.cfr.org/interactives/emerging-arctic?cid=otr_marketing_use-arctic_Infoguide%2523#!#/emerging-arctic?cid=otr_marketing_use-arctic_Infoguide%2523!), accessed on 29.05.2020.



All these states have reformulated their strategies in relation to this region, each claiming increasing portions of the Arctic. These actions took place despite existing legal regulations, especially in the North Pole area, which is international water, and being more than 200 nautical miles from the shores of the riparian states. This distance is considered an area of economic exclusivity, and the rest of its territory is international water, according to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS). In 2008, the five riparian states elaborated the Ilulissat Declaration, promising to solve territorial claims peacefully.<sup>27</sup>

Despite existing legislation, there are states that have refused to endorse it, such as the United States, due to dissatisfaction with the division of territories in the region. In addition, some of the new territorial claims are based on a provision of international law. According to this law, if a state manages to prove that a territory, such as an underwater ridge or an island, is linked to the continental shelf on which it is located, it can claim that sector as national territory.<sup>28</sup>

Following the above, the main objectives of the states bordering the Arctic can be determined: establishing authority over the new maritime routes; establishing military bases to ensure territorial claims and the exploitation of natural resources. Because of this, there are currently 9 legal disputes in the Arctic, some of which are territorial in nature, which may aggravate the relationship between the states involved in the region.<sup>29</sup>

The state that has stood out as the most active in the Arctic is the Russian Federation. The main concrete actions that support this argument are: the establishment of an army corps specially designed for this region, being the only state that has an entire army corps prepared for the conditions in the Arctic; the presentation, during the parade of May 9, 2017, 2018 and 2019, of the military equipment specially developed for the Arctic area; the reopening of six of the former Soviet bases in the Arctic; development of the largest fleet for the Arctic formed of 42 active icebreakers and another 8 under construction; the installation, in 2007, on the bottom of the Arctic Ocean at the North Pole, with the help of two submarines, of the Russian flag, made of titanium; the development of large-scale energy projects such as the Yamal project. All the elements identified above support the argument that Russia is the state with the greatest interests in the region.<sup>30</sup>

Currently, the Russian Federation is the largest state in the area, with about 17 million square kilometers, being one of the richest states in natural resources. After

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>28</sup> Scott G. Borgerson, "The coming Arctic boom", in *Foreign Affairs*, 01.07.2013, URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/global-commons/2013-06-11/coming-arctic-boom>, accessed on 30.05.2020.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>30</sup> Scott G. Borgerson, "The Emerging Arctic", *op.cit.*



the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia underwent a series of major changes, such as the change of the economic system from a centralized system to a market one. This change proved to be disastrous for the Russian economy, which led it to return to a form of state control of economic components of great importance. Since the 2000s, Russia has become one of the largest producers and exporters of natural resources in the world, such as hydrocarbons and other natural resources. The focus on the exploitation and export of energy resources has helped to stabilize the Russian economy rapidly and return to the international stage. This action has made it vulnerable to fluctuations in the global economic market. Due to these facts, it is dependent on the exploitation and export of natural resources, becoming one of the imperatives of the survival of the Russian state in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, the major interest of the Russian Federation for the Arctic, and the attempt to turn it into one of its main future resource bases of strategic importance<sup>31</sup>.

### Conclusions

From what has been presented, it is clear that the current international system is more dynamic than ever. It continues to undergo changes, such as the emergence of new regional security complexes. An example is the Arctic, which is slowly taking shape due to the rapid changes it is undergoing.

Judging by these facts, the change in the Russian Federation's behaviour becomes clearer, due to its increasingly intense activity in the region over the past few years. Therefore, there is a close link between climate change and the behavior of international actors, such as the actions of the Russian Federation in the Arctic, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

One of the reasons why Russia is involved in the Arctic is the huge deposits of natural resources, which constitute basic elements of its survival as a relevant international player.

The situation in the Arctic can evolve in two completely opposite directions: towards a new arms race in the northern hemisphere, for natural resources and trade routes, or towards closer cooperation, which has already established a solid foundation, through the Arctic Council. Despite territorial claims, for the time being, the Arctic territories are an area of communication and cooperation between riparian states, but this period can also be a period of preparation for a future race for resources and for the huge potential of sea passages.

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<sup>31</sup> \*\*\*, "Russia", in *CIA World Factbook*, URL: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rs.html>, accessed on 30.05.2020.



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# THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC AT THE BEGINNING OF 2020

*Cristian BĂHNĂREANU, PhD\**

*In the first half of 2019, many economists and international organizations emphasize the deterioration of macroeconomic indicators that could soon lead to a new economic crisis, much more serious than in 2008-2009<sup>1</sup>. However, the reasons behind the national and global economic downturn in the first six months of 2020 were not those anticipated, but a virus that disrupted the daily life with the most unexpected effects on economic and social activities.*

*It is true that the world economy had already deteriorated over the past year, with GDP rising by only 2.9% in 2019<sup>2</sup>, the lowest rate in the last decade, amid endless trade disputes and policy uncertainties, high poverty rate and inequalities, increasingly climate risks, ubiquitous intra- and interstates disparities. To all this, in the first half of 2020 were added anti-pandemic measures that led to*

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<sup>1</sup> Graham Vanbergen, “The Predicted 2020 Global Recession”, *The World Financial Review*, 1 December 2018, URL: <https://worldfinancialreview.com/the-predicted-2020-global-recession>; Philip Inman, “Pessimists are predicting a global crash in 2020. You can see why”, *The Guardian*, 5 January 2019, URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/jan/05/global-economic-crash-2020-understand-why>; Grace Blakeley, “The next crash: why the world is unprepared for the economic dangers ahead”, *NewStatesman*, 6 March 2019, URL: <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/economy/2019/03/next-crash-why-world-unprepared-economic-dangers-ahead>, all accessed on 15.05.2020; \*\*\*, *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2020*, United Nations, New York, January 2019, pp. 1-9; \*\*\*, *World Economic Outlook: Growth Slowdown, Precarious Recovery*, International Monetary Fund, April 2019, pp. 1-21; \*\*\*, *Global Economic Prospects: Darkening Skies*, World Bank, January 2019, pp. 1-55.

<sup>2</sup> \*\*\*, *World Economic Outlook Update: A Crisis Like No Other, An Uncertain Recovery*, International Monetary Fund, June 2020, p. 7.





*significant declines in almost all economic sectors, stock market crash, labor market collapse, negative oil prices, disruption of trade flows, etc. It seems that this global health problem and the associated economic and social crisis will lead to the deterioration of most macroeconomic indicators in the coming years, which will call into question the architecture of the economic and financial system and medium and long term development prospects.*

**Keywords:** *COVID-19 pandemic; anti-pandemic measures; health crisis; economic crisis; recession; economic recovery.*

### **1. The First Signs of the Economic Crisis**

Towards the end of 2019, several people in the Wuhan region (China) showed symptoms of pneumonia of unknown origin. The cause was later discovered in the form of a new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) highly contagious and, in some cases, even lethal. Thus, the 11 million Wuhan citizens are put in total quarantine for two months. The number of infections is growing exponentially, reaching a total of 10.1 million cases and more than 500,000 deaths worldwide at the end of June 2020<sup>3</sup>.

Initially, Italy, then Spain, France and Great Britain were the states most affected by the pandemic, but later, USA, Russia, India, and the South American countries were forced to face a huge wave of infections. In order to reduce the spread of the virus and its effects on the health of their own citizens, most affected states have declared a state of emergency/necessity, imposing measures that restrict some rights and freedoms, such as:

- limiting/restricting the movement of people and physical distancing;
- (self) isolation at home, hospitalization or quarantine of infected persons and other categories of citizens;
- partial/complete border closures for foreign nationals;
- reduction/suspension of certain transport services (air, rail, road), except freight;
- reduction/cessation of economic activities by carrying out work from home or sending employees to technical unemployment;
- closure of schools, shopping malls, hotels, casinos, clubs, restaurants and public places, sports and cultural centers;
- closure of parks, children's playgrounds and urban open spaces;
- suspension/cancellation of social activities with the participation of large number of people, etc.

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<sup>3</sup> \*\*\*, *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Situation Report -162*, World Health Organization, 30 June 2020, p. 1.



In April 2020, half of the world's population was subject to partial or total quarantine measures<sup>4</sup>, which led to a change in common consumption patterns. Fear of an impending food crisis and supply shortages have led to the lack of flour, yeast, sugar, oil in stores, but also toilet paper, alcohol and other disinfectants. Uncertainty and panic have taken over a large part of the population, who have stocked up on certain staple foods and pharmaceuticals while giving up a number of other food and non-food products, which has led to a sharp decline in consumption and sales. Also, in the early period of the spread of coronavirus, the purchase of tests, medical supplies (masks, gloves, face shields, protective clothes) and medical equipment (ventilators, respiratory devices) necessary to the medical system and the population were subject to "fights" between Western states, so interested in replenishing their strategic stocks.

All these measures to protect the population's health have had different effects on society and on the national and international economy. On the one hand, we have witnessed, in the short term, the reduction of pollution and carbon emissions, the decongestion of road traffic, the decrease in the incidence of seasonal diseases, the increase in savings, etc. On the other hand, revenues from the tourism and hospitality industry, real estate transactions, automotive sector and some services such as air transport, restaurants, bars and cafes, concerts, shows and cultural, sports and entertainment activities were severely affected, but online commerce and social media interaction has grown and most activities have been transferred to IT platforms.

## 2. The International Economic Situation in the First Half of 2020

In early 2020, a new economic crisis began to arise as China's economic environment (19% of world GDP<sup>5</sup>) has deteriorated as a result of restrictions imposed by the coronavirus epidemic. The measures taken by the Beijing authorities at the end of January 2020 had a strong macroeconomic impact and led to the disruption of trade and supply flows with raw materials and generated some problems in production sector. Shutting down Chinese factories has jeopardized the production plans of Apple, Nike, Starbucks<sup>6</sup>, Swiss, Hasbro and other Western

<sup>4</sup> Alasdair Sandford, "Coronavirus: Half of humanity now on lockdown as 90 countries call for confinement", *Euronews*, 3 April 2020, URL: <https://www.euronews.com/2020/04/02/coronavirus-in-europe-spain-s-death-toll-hits-10-000-after-record-950-new-deaths-in-24-hou>, accessed on 20.05.2020.

<sup>5</sup> \*\*\*, *World Economic Outlook Database*, International Monetary Fund, April 2020, URL: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2020/01/weodata/index.aspx>, accessed on 20.05.2020.

<sup>6</sup> Brian Menickella, "COVID-19 Worldwide: The Pandemic's Impact on the Economy and Markets", *Forbes*, 8 April 2020, URL: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/brianmenickella/2020/04/08/covid-19-worldwide-the-pandemics-impact-on-the-economy-and-markets/#3408f33e28c3>, accessed on 22.05.2020.



companies that have been forced to make tough decisions to protect their business by sending workers into technical unemployment and even laying off some of them. Large international retailers and brands have closed many stores in China and some financial institutions, pharmaceutical companies and other multinationals have repatriated or relocated their workforce from China<sup>7</sup>. Rather, carmakers Volkswagen, Ferrari and Tesla have suspended production in Europe due to the collapse of industrial activity and the lack of car components.

Soon, the world's major economic powers – China, SUA, Japan, Germany, France, Great Britain – and more than 200 other countries experienced the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, initial shock causing unprecedented disruptions in global trade, transport and tourism, stress in financial markets and a sharp decline in commodity prices. In the first three months of 2020, international stock markets recorded the biggest declines since 1987, with the Nikkei falling by -27% in late April and the FTSE and Dow Jones by around -35%<sup>8</sup>. The financial markets have reacted to the changes caused by this crisis, many central banks have decided to reduce interest rates to stimulate the economy.

The sharp decline in the demand for goods and services, in production and international supply chains have all contributed to a major rebound in the world economy. Productivity and employment have been negatively influenced by declining incomes, which have led to job losses as a result of insolvency or even the bankruptcy of less resilient companies. Investments are also on downward trend amid strong erosion of confidence due to difficulties in maintaining an adequate level of production and construction and the pessimistic prospects for economic growth and rising financing costs.

Neither emerging markets nor developing economies have been exempted from the consequences of the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. Economic problems in developed countries spread rapidly to these states, capital flows and remittances falling sharply. Already high levels of economic policy uncertainty in the US and the eurozone have led to a significant decline in investment in less developed countries in Europe and Central Asia. To all these were added internal shocks, sometimes much more destructive to economic activity than external ones.

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<sup>7</sup> \*\*\*, “WSJ: Coronavirusul închide economia Chinei pentru restul lumii. Cum vor fi afectate celelalte țări”, *Digi24*, 3 February 2020, URL: <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/mapamond/wsj-coronavirusul-inchide-economia-chinei-pentru-restul-lumii-cum-vor-fi-afectate-celelalte-tari-1254401>, accessed on 22.05.2020.

<sup>8</sup> Lora Jones, Daniele Palumbo, Davis Brown, “Coronavirus: A visual guide to the economic impact”, *BBC News*, 30 June 2020, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-51706225>, accessed on 02.07.2020.

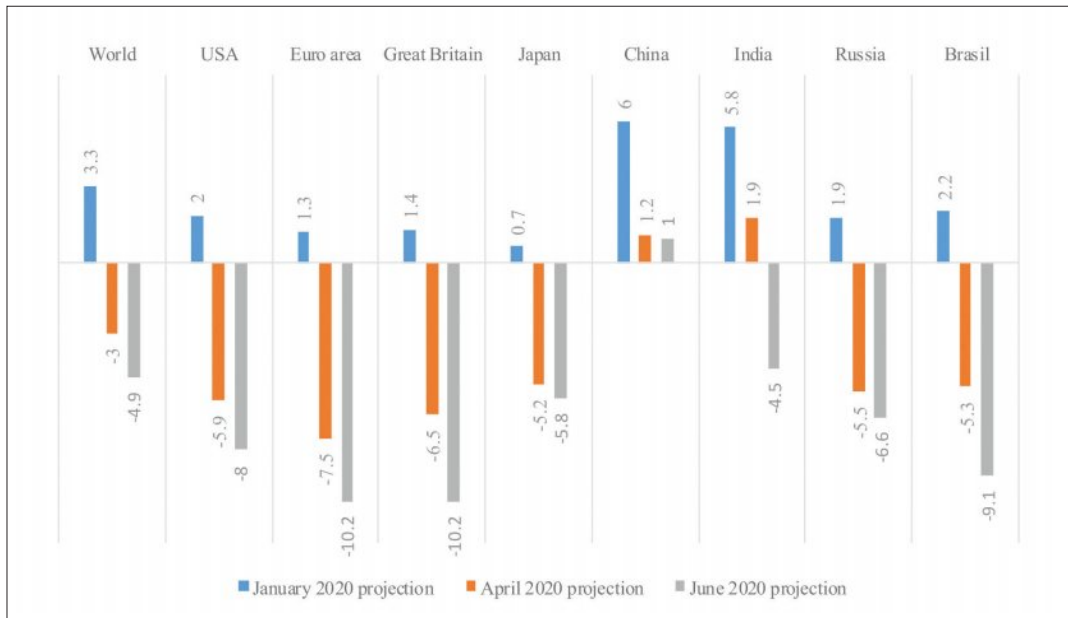


Figure no. 1: Projection of economic growth for 2020<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, the world economy is facing the worst recession since the diplomatic crisis of July 1914 (-6.7%), the Great Depression of the 1930s (-17.6%) and the post-World War II period (-15.4%)<sup>10</sup>, with a severe decline in GDP and an explosion of unemployment in many developed and less developed countries. The IMF estimates, by 2020, a 4.9% contraction in the global economy, with a significant contribution from developed countries (-8%) and emerging and developing countries (-3%)<sup>11</sup>. This means a cumulative losses of over \$12 trillion over the next two years<sup>12</sup>. The only region that seems to be able to stay on plus is East Asia and the Pacific, with an 0.5%, while the South Asian economy will contract by 2.7%, Sub-Saharan Africa by 2.8%, MENA with 4.2%, Europe and Central Asia with 4.7%, and Latin America with 7.2%<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> \*\*\*, “World Economic Outlook Update: Tentative Stabilization, Sluggish Recovery?”, *IMF*, January 2020, p. 9;

\*\*\*, “World Economic Outlook: The Great Lockdown”, *IMF*, April 2020, p. 7; \*\*\*, “World Economic Outlook Update: A Crisis Like No Other, An Uncertain Recovery”, *IMF*, June 2020, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Ayhan Kose, Naotaka Sugawara, “Understanding the depth of the 2020 global recession in 5 charts”, *World Bank Blogs*, 15 June 2020, URL: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/understanding-depth-2020-global-recession-5-charts>, accessed on 02.07.2020.

<sup>11</sup> \*\*\*, “World Economic Outlook Update: A Crisis Like No Other, An Uncertain Recovery”, *IMF*, June 2020, pp. 6-7.

<sup>12</sup> Gita Gopinath, “Reopening from the Great Lockdown: Uneven and Uncertain Recovery”, *IMF Blog*, 24 June 2020, URL: <https://blogs.imf.org/2020/06/24/reopening-from-the-great-lockdown-uneven-and-uncertain-recovery>, accessed on 03.07.2020.

<sup>13</sup> \*\*\*, “The Global Economic Outlook During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Changed World”,



According to the World Trade Organization, global trade activity could fall by up to 32% due to the crisis caused by this pandemic<sup>14</sup>, affecting not only major exporters, but also importers. The main cause is the decline in demand for goods and services available in global markets which generates a “domino effect” that is likely to affect all sectors of the economy. In other words, the anti-pandemic measures taken by the national authorities have amplified the vicious circle of the cause-effect relationship: the restriction of some activities has made it impossible for consumers to purchase goods and services, which meant lower revenues for some companies; these, in turn, had to lower their costs and expenses by reducing wages and staff; the new unemployed have joined the mass of individuals who will not be able to purchase certain goods and services. This dynamic can be clearly observed in the most affected economic sectors, such as travel and tourism, but also in the oil or car industry<sup>15</sup>. However, certain sectors have remained afloat or even increased – e-commerce, food sales, healthcare industry –, but the increase in the number of unemployed due to the closure of stores will also have consequences on the online sales segment if this situation lasts too long.

Also, the advertising revenues seems to fall sharply: Facebook and Google could jointly run a deficit of more than \$44 billion in 2020<sup>16</sup>. Main annual trade, cultural and sport events – for example, the Geneva International Motor Show, the Cannes Film Festival, UEFA European Football Championship, Tokyo Olympic Games, Grand Slam tournaments – have been postponed to 2021, causing significant losses for organizers and media companies.

In order to avoid the worsening of the crisis due to lack of demand, it is necessary to increase government spending to sustain an acceptable level of the population income and the access of economic operators to the funds needed to maintain their employees. Thus, some governments have granted tax exemptions and financial aid to the most affected social categories, increased subsidies to support jobs, postponed the payment of VAT or income tax.

As we have shown, most of the world’s economies are facing the problem of

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*The World Bank*, 8 June 2020, URL: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2020/06/08/the-global-economic-outlook-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-a-changed-world>, accessed on 03.07.2020.

<sup>14</sup> \*\*\*, “Trade set to plunge as COVID-19 pandemic upends global economy”, Press Release, *World Trade Organization*, 8 April 2020, URL: [https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/pres20\\_e/pr855\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres20_e/pr855_e.htm), accessed on 03.07.2020.

<sup>15</sup> Erin Duffin, “Impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the global economy – Statistics & Facts”, *Statista*, 26 June 2020, URL: <https://www.statista.com/topics/6139/covid-19-impact-on-the-global-economy>, accessed on 03.07.2020.

<sup>16</sup> Todd Spangler, “Facebook, Google Could Lose Over \$44 Billion in Ad Revenue in 2020 Because of Coronavirus”, *Variety*, 25 March 2020, URL: <https://variety.com/2020/digital/news/facebook-google-ad-revenue-loss-coronavirus-1203544502>, accessed on 15.06.2020.



the considerable increase in the number of unemployed because of the pandemic and the measures taken. Unemployment has reached high levels given the fact that many employees have had their employment contracts suspended: 47.8% in France (11.3 million workers), 26.9% in Germany (10.1 million), 46.6% in Italy (8.3 million), 23.5% in the United Kingdom (6.3 million) and 24.1% in Spain (4 million)<sup>17</sup>. The USA reached an unemployment rate of 14.7% in April 2020, the highest monthly increase in history, meaning over 7 million people lost their jobs<sup>18</sup>. According to the International Labor Organization, in the first quarter of 2020, globally about 5.4% of working hours were lost (equivalent to 155 million full-time jobs) and is likely to reach 14% (400 million full-time jobs) in the second quarter of 2020 compared to the last quarter of 2019<sup>19</sup>. Factors that generate this situation are shorter working hours in some countries, suspension of employment contracts and technical unemployment in others, staff reduction and unemployment in others.

There has been a significant decrease in demand for oil and petroleum products since the beginning of the pandemic, while large exporters have continued to maintain their normal production quotas in order to reduce prices. For example, oil prices on the US market reached negative levels for the first time in history (about -37 dollars a barrel on April 20, 2020<sup>20</sup>). This exceptional situation arose because the futures contracts for May delivery has no buyers near or at maturity due to lack of storage capacities of the purchased oil. Traders on the US stock market preferred in the very short term to pay buyers to take that oil, given the fact that it is much more expensive to stop a well even for a few hours. To stabilize prices on international markets, OPEC's member countries and Russia have agreed to cut production by about 10% in May and June 2020<sup>21</sup>. As a result, the price of oil rose to over \$20 a barrel.

As early as April 2020, the UN warned that “the COVID-19 pandemic is far more than a health crisis: it is affecting societies and economies at their core”<sup>22</sup> and

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<sup>17</sup> Torsten Müller, Thorsten Schulten, “Ensuring fair short-time work – a European overview”, *ETUI Policy Brief*, No. 7, May 2020, pp. 2-3.

<sup>18</sup> \*\*\*, “Unemployment rate rises to record high 14.7 percent in April 2020”, *The Economics Daily*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 13 May 2020, URL: <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2020/unemployment-rate-rises-to-record-high-14-point-7-percent-in-april-2020.htm>, accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>19</sup> \*\*\*, “ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world at work”, Fifth edition, *International Labour Organization*, 30 June 2020, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Sheela Tobben, “Oil for Less Than Nothing? Here’s How That Happened”, *Bloomberg*, 21 April 2020, URL: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-20/negative-prices-for-oil-here-s-what-that-means-quicktake>, accessed on 18.06.2020.

<sup>21</sup> Clifford Krauss, “Oil Nations, Prodded by Trump, Reach Deal to Slash Production”, *The New York Times*, 12 April 2020, URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/12/business/energy-environment/opecc-russia-saudi-arabia-oil-coronavirus.html?searchResultPosition=22>, accessed on 18.06.2020.

<sup>22</sup> \*\*\*, *A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19*, United Nations, April 2020, p. 3.





data show that, in general, economic and social costs will be high. The mitigation of negative effects depends on a number of factors, including how this health crisis will evolve, the duration and magnitude of any disruptions to economic activities, the impact on the economy and society as a whole, the implementation of monetary and fiscal support measures.

### 3. The State of the National Economy in the First Six Months of 2020

Romania's economy avoided recession earlier this year, growing by only 0.3% in the first quarter of 2020, compared to 1.2% in the fourth quarter of 2019<sup>23</sup>, being among the three European countries that reported a positive dynamics. This growth was supported by domestic demand, retail trade increasing by 9.1%<sup>24</sup> due to the favorable situation on the labor market and more relaxed credit conditions before the incidence of the pandemic. Although the construction sector advanced by 32.6%<sup>25</sup>, the industry decreased by 5.9%<sup>26</sup>, mainly because of the manufacturing sector and the negative impact of the crisis on international trade flows.

The impact of the pandemic on the national economy was much stronger in the second quarter of 2020 due to the reduction/cessation of activity in most sectors<sup>27</sup>. Romanian Ministry of Finance estimates a 15% contraction in this quarter based on sharp decline in industry and services<sup>28</sup>. It is hoped for a rapid "V" type economic recovery based on measures to maintain liquidity at companies level and "freezing" of production capacity, support for small and medium-sized enterprises, including through the SME Invest Programme, payment of technical unemployment by the state, state-guaranteed loans of up to 90% and subsidy of up to 50% of the interest rate for large companies, capping fuel and utility prices, deferral of rent payments and bank loan rates. Other measures included faster VAT refunds, suspension of forced

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<sup>23</sup> \*\*\*, *Comparativ cu trimestrul IV 2019, produsul intern brut în trimestrul I 2020 a fost, în temeni reali, mai mare cu 0,3%*, Press release no. 134, Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 15 May 2020.

<sup>24</sup> \*\*\*, *Cifra de afaceri din comerțul cu amănuntul în luna martie 2020*, Press release no. 117, Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 6 May 2020.

<sup>25</sup> \*\*\*, "Volumul lucrărilor de construcții a crescut cu 32,3% în primul trimestru al anului", *Economica*, 15 May 2020, URL: [https://www.economica.net/volumul-lucrurilor-de-construcții-a-crescut-cu-32-3prc-in-primul-trimestru-al-anului\\_184503.html](https://www.economica.net/volumul-lucrurilor-de-construcții-a-crescut-cu-32-3prc-in-primul-trimestru-al-anului_184503.html), accessed on 23.06.2020.

<sup>26</sup> \*\*\*, "Producția industrială, în scădere", *Forbes*, 3 June 2020, URL: <https://www.forbes.ro/articole/productia-industrial-a-scadere-168313>, accessed on 25.06.2020.

<sup>27</sup> A.N.: The state of emergency established on the territory of Romania lasted two months (March 16 - May 14, 2020) and meant the total or partial cessation of activity in certain sectors.

<sup>28</sup> Alexandra Pele, "Optimism total la Ministerul Finanțelor – Desenul în "V" după care ar urma să-și revină economia", *cursdeguvernare.ro*, 5 May 2020, URL: <https://cursdeguvernare.ro/optimism-total-la-ministerul-finantelor-desenul-in-v-dupa-care-ar-urma-sa-si-revina-economia.html?source=biziday>, accessed on 25.06.2020.



execution of overdue debtors and tax control actions, reductions in the payment of income tax, delaying of property taxes payment by three months. The National Bank of Romania also supported the economy by injecting more liquidity into the banking system, purchasing government securities on the secondary market and reducing the reference interest rate to 2% in March 2020 and even 1.75% in June 2020<sup>29</sup>.

Romania has entered the health crisis with some economic vulnerabilities, such as: unsustainable budget deficit (4.3% of GDP<sup>30</sup>), which means a narrower room for maneuver to support the economy; growing trade and current account deficits; low level of budget revenues; some rigidity in spendings. Against this background, Standard&Poor's maintained Romania's rating at BBB-/A-3, with negative prospects<sup>31</sup> if fiscal and external imbalances persist by failing to implement adequate fiscal consolidation measures and continuing expansionary policy. The Romanian authorities must also consider a set of structural reforms to strengthen the fiscal framework as a result of violation of European fiscal rules and the activation of the excessive deficit procedure, prior to the outbreak of this pandemic<sup>32</sup>.

At national level, the labor market has been deeply affected by the measures taken by competent authorities to prevent and reduce the spread of coronavirus, so that, at the end of May 2020, there were over 1 million employment contracts suspended or terminated<sup>33</sup>. Most cases were registered in the manufacturing industry (over 243,000 suspended/terminated contracts) and the retail/repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (over 169,000); also, the hotel and restaurant sector counts 99,000 suspended contracts and the construction field about 64,000 terminated contracts. As a result, the unemployment rate rose to 5.2% in June 2020<sup>34</sup>, almost the same level as in the summer of 2017, meaning 467,000 unemployed people compared to 352,000 at the beginning of the pandemic (February 2020).

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<sup>29</sup> \*\*\*, *Rata dobânzii de politică monetară și ratele facilităților permanente*, National Bank of Romania, URL : <https://www.bnr.ro/Rata-dobanzii-de-politica-monetara-1744.aspx>, accessed on 25.06.2020.

<sup>30</sup> \*\*\*, *General government deficit/surplus*, Eurostat, May 2020, URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tec00127&plugin=1>, accessed on 25.06.2020.

<sup>31</sup> \*\*\*, "Ratingul României, menținut de agenția S&P la BBB-", *Digi24*, 5 June 2020, URL: <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/economie/ratingul-de-tara-al-romaniei-a-fost-mentinut-de-agentia-standard-and-poors-la-bbb-1318665>, accessed on 30.06.2020.

<sup>32</sup> A.N.: **In March 2020, the EU decided to activate a general escape clause from the fiscal rules contained in the Stability and Growth Pact, due to the problems caused by the pandemic.**

<sup>33</sup> \*\*\*, *Situația contractelor individuale de muncă suspendate/încetate, la data de 28 mai 2020*, Press release, Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Romania, 28 May 2020, URL: <https://mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/comunicare/comunicate-de-presa/5967-situația-contractelor-individuale-de-munca-suspendate-încetate-la-data-de-28-mai-2020>, accessed on 30.06.2020.

<sup>34</sup> \*\*\*, *În luna iunie 2020, rata șomajului în formă ajustată sezonier a fost de 5,2%*, Press release no. 197, Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 30 July 2020.



Most international organizations estimate an economic contraction for Romania during 2020: the European Commission forecasts a GDP decline by 6%<sup>35</sup>, the International Monetary Fund by 5%<sup>36</sup> and the World Bank by 5.7%<sup>37</sup>. These projections are mainly based on the expansion in budget deficit (4.17% of GDP in the first six months<sup>38</sup>) as a result of unforeseen expenses related to the health crisis<sup>39</sup> and of some commitments assumed politically before the crisis (increase of pensions, doubling of child allowances, increase of teachers' salaries, etc.). Another cause is given by the strong impact of international market developments on the domestic economy given the fact that Romania is an importer of goods.

If European leaders reach an agreement on the post-pandemic economic recovery plan<sup>40</sup>, it seems that Romania will receive about € 33.5 billion in the form of grants and loans on favorable terms in order to accelerate the real convergence of Romania with the EU developed economies. According to the Investment and Economic Recovery Plan<sup>41</sup>, the short-term priority is to increase the completion of public infrastructure works in progress and the preparation of other major medium- and long-term infrastructure projects in the fields of transport, energy, communications, agriculture, health, sport and education. The transition of the Romanian economy to a sustainable one involves the transition from subsidies and stimulating consumption to comprehensive structural reforms leading to increased competitiveness of Romanian companies, investments in key areas of public infrastructure, digitalization of the economy and public administration.

Although the economic and social situation is not at all favourable, the perception of the population and the business environment regarding the current and future state of the Romanian economy rose from 65.3 points in April 2020 (the

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<sup>35</sup> \*\*\*, *European Economic Forecast: Summer 2020 (Interim)*, Institutional Paper 132, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, European Commission, July 2020, p. 36.

<sup>36</sup> \*\*\*, "Romania: At a Glance", *International Monetary Fund*, URL: <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/ROU>, accessed on 30.06.2020.

<sup>37</sup> \*\*\*, *Global Economic Prospects*, A World Bank Group Flagship Report, June 2020, p. 80.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Manea, "Deficitul bugetar explodează: după 6 luni din an, deficitul a crescut la 45 mld. lei, aproape cât s-a înregistrat pe tot anul 2019", *Ziarul Financiar*, 28 July 2020, URL: <https://www.zf.ro/banci-si-asigurari/deficitul-bugetar-explodeaza-dupa-6-luni-din-an-deficitul-a-crescut-19444930>, accessed on 30.07.2020.

<sup>39</sup> A.N.: The expenses included additional funds for the health system, the support of 75% of the parents income if they stay at home with the children during the period when the schools are closed, measures to support companies, etc.

<sup>40</sup> \*\*\*, "Europe's moment: Repair and prepare for the next generation", *Press release*, European Commission, Brussels, 27 May 2020, URL: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_940](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_940), accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>41</sup> \*\*\*, *Planul național de investiții și relansare economică*, Romanian Government, July 2020, p. 7.



lowest level in the last 18 years) to 77.2 points in June 2020<sup>42</sup> based on improved confidence in the construction sector and industry.

### Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic has generated an extremely sensitive dilemma with serious consequences for the health of the population and the smooth running of the economy. Measures to restrict free movement of people and some activities between March and May 2020 have affected the national and international economy, but have reduced the spread of the virus. The gradual lifting of restrictions, starting in May, in order to restart the economy has led to an alarming increase in the number of infections and deaths, so that authorities were forced to find a balance in the application of anti-pandemic measures. Although experts say that some states relaxed the restrictions too soon, probably sooner or later, they would have reached the same situation.

It is a reality that the national and global economy will continue to contract in the second half of the 2020 as a result of both the measures taken in the spring and a possible new wave of infections. This situation depends on a number of uncertain factors, such as: the coronavirus behavior and the success rate in developing a vaccine; the duration and intensity of measures to prevent and reduce the spread of the virus; the decrease of expenses due to voluntary distancing; the ability of displaced workers to find jobs; the costs generated by increasing safety in the workplace; the reconfiguring of supply chains that affect productivity; the funding shortfalls and declining in external demand and, in general, the ability of decision-makers to counter the pressures on the financial market and to protect companies and households already affected by the recession.

Now, more than ever, there is a need for multilateral cooperation and global solidarity, for the involvement of the international community in supporting national initiatives and providing financial assistance to countries that are not very well prepared in economic and health field. Decision-makers must cooperate at all levels to address inequalities and social and economic problems that threaten a possible recovery from the crisis caused by this new coronavirus.

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<sup>42</sup> \*\*\*, *Business and consumer survey results for June 2020*, The Directorate-General Financial and Economic Affairs (DG ECFIN) of the European Commission, 2020, p. 5.



# MEASURES AND CONSEQUENCES OF MANAGING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: FROM PHYSICAL DISTANCE TO SOCIAL DISTANCE

*Alexandra SARCINSCHI, PhD\**

In the first half of 2020, the world faced a dramatic crisis: the COVID-19 pandemic. The measures taken by national governments have included a series of actions primarily aimed at stopping the spread of the virus. Those measures were based on isolating the population in their homes and maintaining a minimum distance between them. The term frequently used for the latter case was “social distance” (“social distancing”), a concept well-known in psychology and sociology, but with a different content than the one attributed by the main communicators during the crisis, who actually were referring to the physical distance between people.

Unfortunately, during this period, a crisis caused by a real social distance between some groups in certain countries was triggered, resulting in mass protests, which evaded the recommendation to maintain physical distance. This brought to the fore the danger of exacerbating the pandemic and the emergence of the second wave, including the countries with a decrease in the number of diseases.

In the following we will analyse the distinction between the two notions and we will identify the main sources of the term *social distance*.

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## 1. Physical distance and social distance

The first cases of viral “pneumonia of unknown causes”<sup>1</sup>, in Wuhan Province in China, was publicly identified late December 2019. From then on, it took only about two weeks for the first case to be reported in Thailand and, then, in Japan. At the end of January 2020, Germany, Japan, Vietnam and the US reported the first patients infected with COVID-19 who did not travel to China but came into contact with people who visited Wuhan<sup>2</sup>; on 30<sup>th</sup> of January, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of the new coronavirus a public health emergency of international concern, and on 11<sup>th</sup> of March, the pandemic was declared<sup>3</sup>. Two days later, the WHO declared Europe the epicentre of the pandemic, outside China<sup>4</sup>.

The first actions to manage this crisis included limiting the spread of the virus by implementing isolation measures, both individually (maintaining physical distance, quarantine, self-isolation), and nationally (temporarily restricting non-essential travels, closing borders). The WHO and national governments used the notion of *social distancing* in their communication strategy, but in the second half of March, the organization decided to replace it with *physical distancing*, as the former implies “a sense of disconnection from loved ones. And at a time when being physically isolated from others can take a toll on mental health, the organization wants to emphasize how critical it is for people to stay socially connected”<sup>5</sup>.

A matter of polysemy arises from the parallel use of the two forms of this notion. With regard to this, the Romanian expert in philology, Rodica Zafiu, considers that the term *social distance* can be associated with a limited number of verbs (for example “to keep”), while *social distancing* transmits an active message and has a greater autonomy<sup>6</sup>. Regarding polysemy, R. Zafiu also notes that it comes from the disciplines in which the notion is used: medicine (epidemiology), psychology and sociology.

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<sup>1</sup> \*\*\*, “Timeline of WHO’s response to COVID-19”, *WHO*, 29.06.2020, URL: <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/29-06-2020-covidtimeline>, accessed on 30.06.2020.

<sup>2</sup> \*\*\*, “COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic”, *Worldometer*, 30.06.2020, URL: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus>, accessed on 30.06.2020.

<sup>3</sup> \*\*\*, “Timeline of WHO’s response to COVID-19”, *WHO*, 29.06.2020, URL: <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/29-06-2020-covidtimeline>, accessed on 30.06.2020.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>5</sup> Harmeet Kaur, “Forget “social distancing”. The WHO prefers we call it “physical distancing” because social connections are more important than ever”, *CNN*, 18.04.2020, URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/15/world/social-distancing-language-change-trnd/index.html>, accessed on 25.06.2020.

<sup>6</sup> Rodica Zafiu, “Distanța socială”, in *Dilema veche*, No. 840, 26.03- 01.04.2020, URL: <https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/pe-ce-lume-traim/articol/distanta-sociala>, accessed on 25.06.2020.

L.V., “Distanță socială”, in *Dicționar de sociologie*, (Editors.) Cătălin Zamfir and Lazăr Vlăsceanu, Babel Publishing House, Bucharest, 1998, p.175.





Given this distinction, it appears that the argument used by WHO officials is incomplete because, if it initially offered only the medical perspective on this type of distancing, the subsequent addition presents only the psychological perspective. In reality, sociology has a more comprehensive approach to the issue of *social distance*, considered to be the perceived and evaluated difference between persons or groups by referring to a criterion that can be either a characteristic of the person or a group, a position in the hierarchy, a specific behaviour<sup>7</sup>. It is obvious that social distance is correlated to the concept of attitude, and attitude is “a personal or group orientation, resulting from the combination of affective, cognitive and conative elements, which exerts influences of direction, motivation or evaluation on behaviour”<sup>8</sup>. Given the multidimensionality of the attitude, it is obvious that is difficult to assess the social distance, being necessary to take into account the behavioural, cognitive and evaluative dimensions.

The first scale for measuring social distance was developed in 1925 by Emory S. Bogardus. He assumed the concept from Robert E. Park, who defined social distance by referring to the attempt to measure the degrees of understanding and intimacy that characterize personal and social relationships in general<sup>9</sup>. R. E. Park emphasized that social distance is different from spatial relations<sup>10</sup> and, also, refers to the concept of *prejudice* as “a more or less instinctive and spontaneous disposition to maintain social distances”<sup>11</sup>. His approach is inspired by Georg Simmel’s theory of *the stranger*, as a person, a bearer of a social role, who comes into contact with a racial or cultural group; he is “attached” to it, but not yet an “organic” part of that group<sup>12</sup>. Prejudice is an essential source of conflict between ethnic/racial/religious groups, its construction being favoured even by the isolation of groups and individuals and, in particular, by situations of conflict or competition<sup>13</sup>. The concept of prejudice includes *the stereotypes* based on which the human individuals may feel the need to distance themselves from a certain group, even if they have not been

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<sup>7</sup> L.V., “Distanță socială”, in *Dicționar de sociologie*, (Editors) Cătălin Zamfir and Lazăr Vlăsceanu, Babel Publishing House, Bucharest, 1998, p.175.

<sup>8</sup> M.V., “Atitudine”, in Cătălin Zamfir and Lazăr Vlăsceanu (Editors), *op. cit.*, 1998, pp. 52-55.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Ezra Park, “The Concept of Social Distance As Applied to the Study of Racial Attitudes and Racial Relations”, in *Journal of Applied Sociology*, Vol. 8/1924, pp. 339-344, URL: [https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Park/Park\\_1924.html](https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Park/Park_1924.html), accessed on 25.06.2020; Emory S. Bogardus, “Social Distance and Its Origins”, in *Journal of Applied Sociology* Vol. 9/1925, pp. 216-226, URL: [https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Bogardus/Bogardus\\_1925b.html](https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Bogardus/Bogardus_1925b.html), accessed on 25.06.2020.

<sup>10</sup> Robert E. Park, *op. cit.*, 1924.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> Georg Simmel, “The Stranger”, in Kurt Wolff (translation), *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, Free Press, New York, 1950, pp. 402 – 408, URL: [https://www.infoamerica.org/documentos\\_pdf/simmel01.pdf](https://www.infoamerica.org/documentos_pdf/simmel01.pdf), accessed on 26.06.2020.

<sup>13</sup> I. F., “Prejudecată”, in Cătălin Zamfir and Lazăr Vlăsceanu (Editors), *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 441.



in direct contact with it. In general, stereotypes and prejudice refer, in particular, to unfavourable attitudes towards certain ethnic/racial/religious categories<sup>14</sup>. As a result, *discrimination* occurs, which is defined as “unequal treatment of individuals or groups in relation to certain categorical traits such as ethnic, racial, religious or class affiliation”<sup>15</sup>.

Prejudice and *discrimination, especially on racial and ethnic grounds, create social distance, even in groups where there is no physical distance*<sup>16</sup>. Following his studies, which were completed over half a century ago, E.S. Bogardus concluded that social distances, especially in terms of different races, disappear very slowly over time, but as people become better informed one about the other, they tend to decrease. However, there are exceptions in which *social distances can suddenly and extensively increase towards other social groups when unequal competition develops that would cause insecurity, fear or loss of status for the majority*<sup>17</sup>.

Even if social relations are inevitably correlated with the spatial ones, physical distance translates into a geometric distance between human individuals that is useful in the struggle for a common goal (pandemic crisis management) and which requires the mobilization of cohesion resources, while social distance means more often emotional separation, rejection of social interaction with people belonging to different groups and, ultimately, it can affect the societal security.

## 2. The crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and social distance

In the case of the events from the first half of 2020, there were, in the first phase, protests against isolation measures, in the US (April 2020)<sup>18</sup>, but also in several European countries (May 2020), such as France<sup>19</sup>, Italy<sup>20</sup>, Spain, Germany,

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<sup>14</sup> G. N., “Stereotip”, in Cătălin Zamfir and Lazăr Vlăsceanu (Editors), *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 603.

<sup>15</sup> I. Mih., “Discriminare”, in Cătălin Zamfir and Lazăr Vlăsceanu (Editors), *op. cit.*, 1998, pp. 174-175.

<sup>16</sup> \*\*\*, “Segregation”, in David Brinkerhoff, Lynn K. White, Suzanne Ortega, Rose Weitz, *Essentials of Sociology*, Cengage Learning, Wadsworth, 2007, pp. 179-182.

<sup>17</sup> Donald F. Whalen, *The impact of social distance on community in university apartments*, Iowa State University, Digital Repository, 1987, p.16, URL: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=10316&context=rtd>, accessed on 26.06.2020.

<sup>18</sup> Jordan Wildon, “Lobby-știi pro-armament din SUA and protestele împotriva măsurilor anti-corona”, *Deutsche Welle*, 25.04.2020, URL: <https://www.dw.com/ro/lobby-i%C8%99tii-pro-armament-din-sua-%C8%99i-protestele-%C3%AEmpotriva-m%C4%83surilor-anti-corona/a-53241540>, accessed on 26.06.2020.

<sup>19</sup> \*\*\*, “French authorities deal with protest in Paris suburbs during coronavirus lockdown”, *CBC*, 22.04.2020, URL: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/france-paris-protests-1.5541119>, accessed on 26.06.2020.

<sup>20</sup> \*\*\*, “Coronavirus: Far-right Rome protest turns briefly violent”, *BBC News*, 06.06.2020, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-52951920>, accessed on 26.06.2020.



the Great Britain, Poland<sup>21</sup>. According to sources, the protests were supported by far-right movements: in the US, by conservatives, who are in support of the pro-firearms lobby (in March 2020, in the US were sold about 1.9 million firearms, a trend that was also registered at Barack Obama's second election as president – 2 million firearms<sup>22</sup>), and in Europe by far-right groups, such as VOX (Spain), AfD and the Identity Movement (Germany)<sup>23</sup>. These protests are based not only on issues related to the limitation of the individual rights and freedoms, but also on the insecurity felt as a result of the emotional stress caused by the pandemic.

Another case of social movements, broader and more visible than the previous ones, is represented by the protests triggered by the murder of the African-American citizen, George Floyd, during his arrest by the Minneapolis Police Forces, on 25<sup>th</sup> of May, 2020. Their worldwide expansion, as well as the developments related to some changes, peaceful or not, in the symbolism of recent history (and not only), brought to the public's attention the problem of systemic racism that characterizes the contemporary society.

In the following we will analyse the main events, in the first half of 2020, caused by the two types of social distance identified: the one induced by the insecurity enhanced by pandemic (with main economic causes) and the one induced by discrimination on racial and ethnic grounds.

### ***2.1. Social distance induced by insecurity (psychological, social and economic causes)***

The results of a survey conducted between 23.04.2020-01.05.2020 at the level of the European Union shows that, in terms of adaptation to the COVID-19 crisis, 50% of the surveyed population feels uncertainty, while 41% feels hope<sup>24</sup>. Grouped by types of emotional status, the responses reveal that negative emotional status is predominant in most EU countries (negative emotions status includes feelings

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<sup>21</sup> Haley Ott, "19 arrested in UK as anti-lockdown protests demonstrate across Europe", *CBS News*, 18.05.2020, URL: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/anti-lockdown-protests-united-kingdom-19-arrested/>, accessed on 26.06.2020; \*\*\*, "Coronavirus latest: Spain anti-lockdown protests draws thousands of far-right supporters", *Deutsche Welle*, 23.05.2020, URL: <https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-latest-spain-anti-lockdown-protest-draws-thousands-of-far-right-supporters/a-53542279>, accessed on 26.06.2020.

<sup>22</sup> Keith Collins, David Yaffe-Bellany, "About 2 Million Guns Were Sold in the U.S. as Virus Fears Spread", *New York Times*, 02.04.2020, URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/01/business/coronavirus-gun-sales.html>, accessed on 26.06.2020.

<sup>23</sup> Christina Goßner, "Anti-lockdown protests in Germany infiltrated by far-right extremists", *Euractiv*, 14.05.2020, URL: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/coronavirus/news/anti-lockdown-protests-in-germany-infiltrated-by-far-right-extremists/>, accessed on 26.06.2020.

<sup>24</sup> Julien Zalc, Robin Maillard ((Editors) *Uncertainty/EU/Hope. Public opinion in times of COVID-19*, European Parliament, June 2020, URL: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/beheard/eurobarometer/public-opinion-in-the-time-of-covid-19>, accessed on 20.06.2020.



such as uncertainty, helplessness, frustration, fear and anger, and positive emotions status includes hope, confidence and helpfulness).

**Table no. 1:** Correlating the answer to the question “What feelings best describe your current emotional status? Please select up to 3 answers” (%; 23.04.2020-01.05.2020)<sup>25</sup> with the evolution of the number of cases in EU countries during the survey period<sup>26</sup> and the total number of population in the reference countries<sup>27</sup>

	Emotional status (23/04/2020-01/05/2020)				The evolution of the pandemic in EU countries during the period 23/04/2020-01/05/2020				Total number of population
					Evolution of COVID-19 cases (Total)		Evolution of deaths (Total)		
	Negative emotions	Positive emotions	Other	DK	23/04	01/05	23/04	01/05	
Greece	160	63	5	1	2,408	2,519	121	140	10,099,000
Spain	182	62	4	2	200,194	213,435	21,717	24,543	46,755,000
Ireland	146	79	10	2	16,671	20,612	769	1,232	4,938,000
Poland	168	50	5	4	10,169	12,877	426	644	37,847,000
Portugal	114	88	4	2	21,982	25,056	785	959	10,197,000
Belgium	149	69	5	4	45,548	50,328	7,091	8,091	11,590,000
Italy	150	72	3	1	187,327	205,463	25,085	27,967	60,462,000
Slovakia	135	77	7	4	1,244	1,396	14	23	54,600,000
Finland	124	81	8	5	4,129	4,995	149	211	5,541,000
Hungary	134	85	7	5	2,284	2,863	225	323	9,660,000
Romania	135	99	4	3	9,710	12,240	508	717	19,238,000
Czech Rep.	118	67	8	7	7,136	7,682	210	236	10,709,000
France	161	58	3	4	117,961	128,121	21,307	24,342	65,274,000
Netherlands	105	98	8	6	34,842	39,316	4,054	4,795	17,135,000
Sweden	118	63	9	8	16,004	21,092	1,937	2,586	10,099,000
Germany	115	91	8	6	148,046	159,119	5,094	6,288	83,784,000
Denmark	100	104	9	7	7,912	9,158	384	452	5,792,000
Slovenia	108	97	11	4	1,353	1,429	79	91	2,079,000
Bulgaria	112	90	5	2	1,024	1,506	49	66	6,948,000
Austria	94	112	9	4	14,924	15,424	494	584	9,006,000
Croatia	121	80	9	5	1,950	2,076	48	69	4,105,000

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>26</sup> \*\*\*, “WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard”, WHO, 2020, URL: <https://covid19.who.int/>, accessed on 20.06.2020.

<sup>27</sup> \*\*\*, “World Population Prospects 2019”, UN, 2019, URL: <https://population.un.org/wpp/DataQuery>, accessed on 20.06.2020.



It is observed that, in general, a large share of responses grouped as negative emotions corresponds to a large number of COVID-19 cases, but also deaths in Spain, France and Italy. At the same time, there are cases where, although the predominant emotional status is negative, as in Greece and Poland, the number of coronavirus cases and deaths is lower than in other countries, even compared to the total population. In the case of Germany, however, the situation is different: if in the analysed period the number of COVID-19 cases is higher than in France, and that of deaths – lower, the difference between the share of negative and positive emotional status is relatively small.

These findings can be correlated both with the crisis management measures implemented by governments and with elements related to the specifics of the analysed countries, such as social attitudes, collective memory, collective behaviour, level of economic development etc. Since, at least in the case of the psychological characteristics of the respective nations, the available data are not sufficient, we will bring to the attention, in the first phase, only the component of crisis response policies and related measures.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) database, most EU countries have closed non-essential sectors, including schools, and imposed physical distance and travel restrictions<sup>28</sup>. Thus, in Spain, the state of emergency from mid-March was repeatedly extended until 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 2020, including traffic restrictions, limiting commercial, cultural, recreational, hotel and restaurant activities, as well as reducing public transport. In France, schools have been closed, all non-essential activities, long-distance travel and excursions have been banned, night bans have been introduced in some cities. In Italy, the national quarantine expired on 4<sup>th</sup> of May, 2020, and was followed by the gradual reopening of activities under new safety rules. According to data published by the IMF, the differences between the measures taken in these countries and those taken in Greece, Poland and Germany are not significant: rules of physical distance have been applied, schools have been closed, restrictions have been imposed on all non-essential sectors and travel<sup>29</sup>.

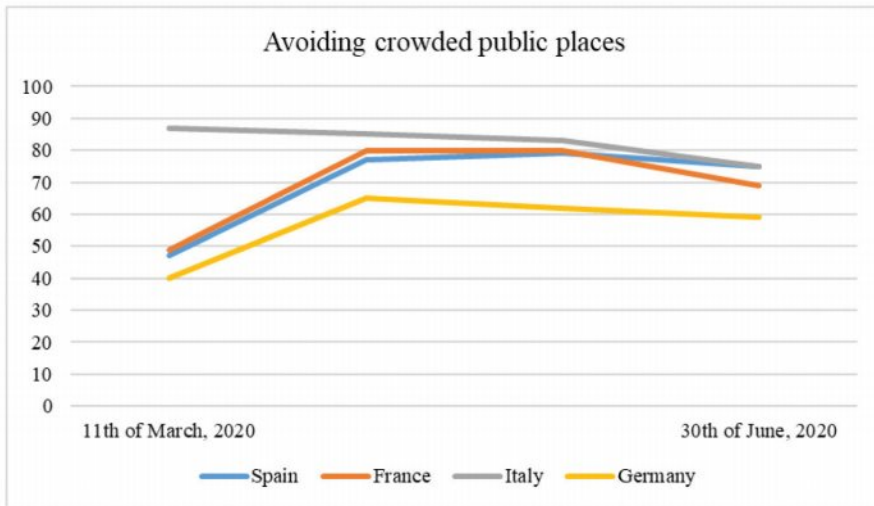
Since mid-March, when the most European countries imposed these restrictions, the percentage of those who say they comply with the basic rules – avoiding crowded public spaces and maintaining a proper hands hygiene – has come down in the analysed countries (except for Greece and Poland for which there are no data).

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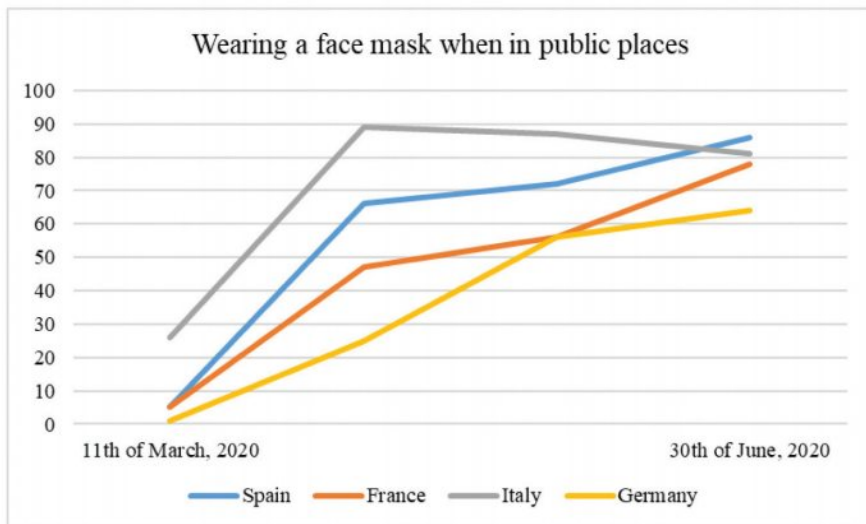
<sup>28</sup> \*\*\*, “Policy Responses to COVID-19”, 2020, *International Monetary Fund*, URL: <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#R>, accessed on 20.06.2020.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*.





**Figure no. 1:** Highlighting the change in behaviour between 11.03.2020-30.06.2020 – people from each country who say they avoid crowded public spaces (%)<sup>30</sup>

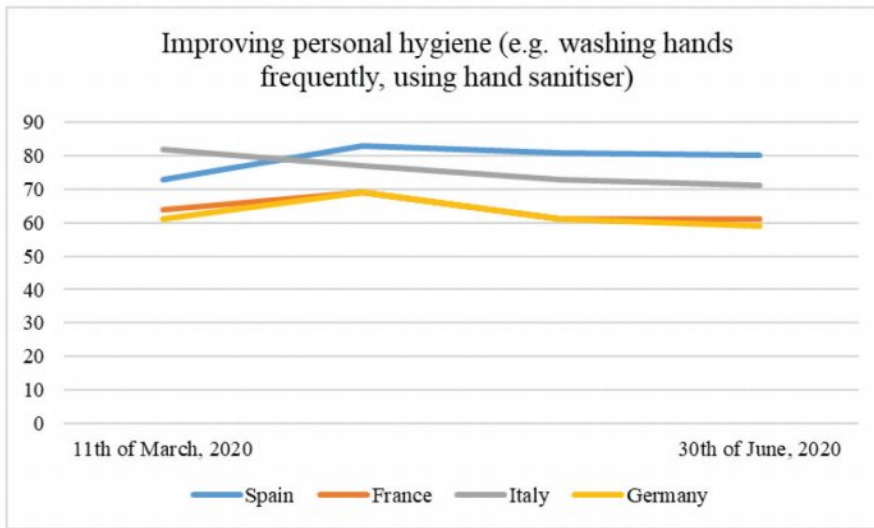


**Figure no. 2:** Highlighting the change in behaviour between 11.03.2020-30.06.2020 – people from each country who say they are wearing a facemask when in public spaces (%)<sup>31</sup>

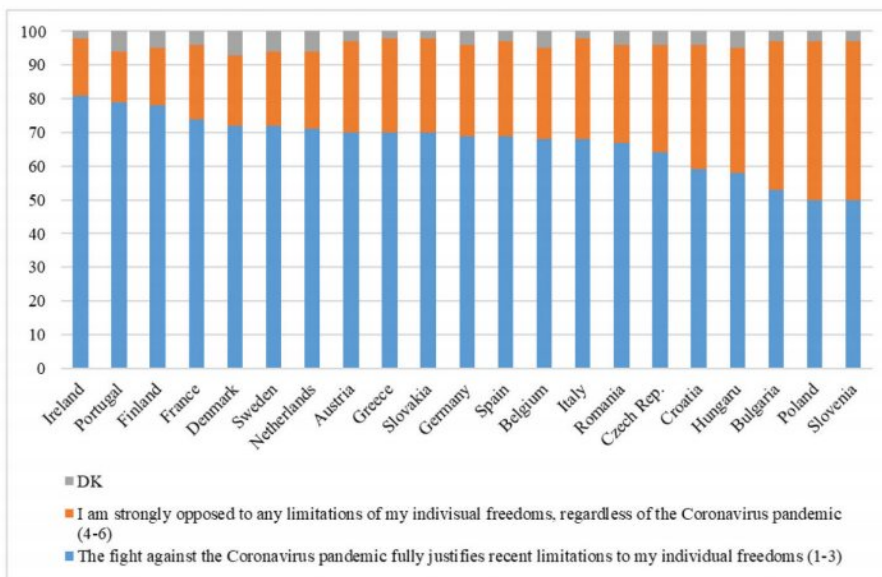
<sup>30</sup> \*\*\*, *Personal measures taken to avoid COVID-19, 2020*, URL: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/international/articles-reports/2020/03/17/personal-measures-taken-avoid-covid-19>, accessed on 07.07.2020.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem.*





**Figure no. 3:** Highlighting the change in behaviour between 11.03.2020-30.06.2020 – people from each country who say they improved personal hygiene (%)<sup>32</sup>

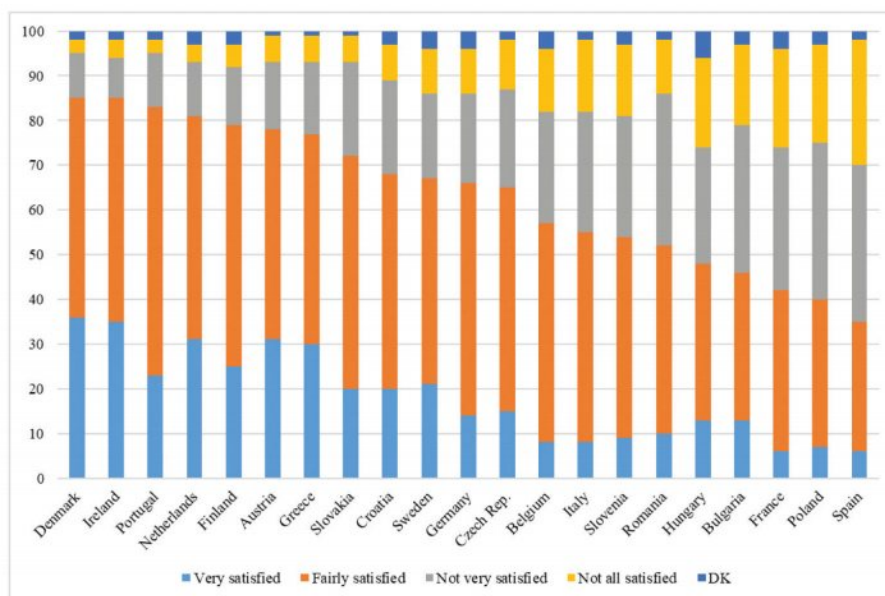


**Figure no. 4:** Answer to the question “Please use this scale from 1 to 6, to position yourself between these two statements, where 1 means that the fight against the coronavirus pandemic fully justifies recent limitations to your individual freedoms, and 6 that you are strongly opposed to any limitations of your individual freedoms, regardless of the coronavirus pandemic” (%)<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem.

France and Italy are most likely to change their behaviour in order to comply with the basic rules imposed for managing the COVID-19 crisis. Moreover, the EU survey shows that the public is in favour of measures restricting the basic freedoms of citizens (Figure no. 4): in France, 74% of those surveyed agree that the fight against the pandemic fully justifies recent limitations to their individual freedoms, in Germany and Spain – 69% each, and in Italy – 68%<sup>33</sup>.

There is a different situation in terms of satisfaction with the measures that governments have taken so far against the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure no. 5): in France, 54% of the respondents say they are not satisfied with these measures, and in Spain – 63%; in contrast, in Germany and Italy the proportion of those satisfied with these measures predominates (66% and 55%, respectively)<sup>35</sup>.



**Figure no. 5:** Answer to the question “How satisfied or not are you with the measures your government has taken son far against the coronavirus pandemic?” (%)<sup>36</sup>

These responses correlate with those recorded in the Ipsos survey on the main concerns of the population during the pandemic; the survey was conducted in 27 countries around the world<sup>37</sup>. Although compared to previous months (April and

<sup>33</sup> Julien Zalc, Robin Maillard (Editors), *op. cit.*, June 2020.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>37</sup> \*\*\*, “What Worries the World”, Ipsos, June 2020, URL: <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2020-06/node-688346-689151.zip>, accessed on 01.07.2020.



May), in June is recorded a decrease in the percentage of those who consider the new coronavirus to be the most worrying topic in their countries, it still remains a major concern for the population (Figure no. 6).

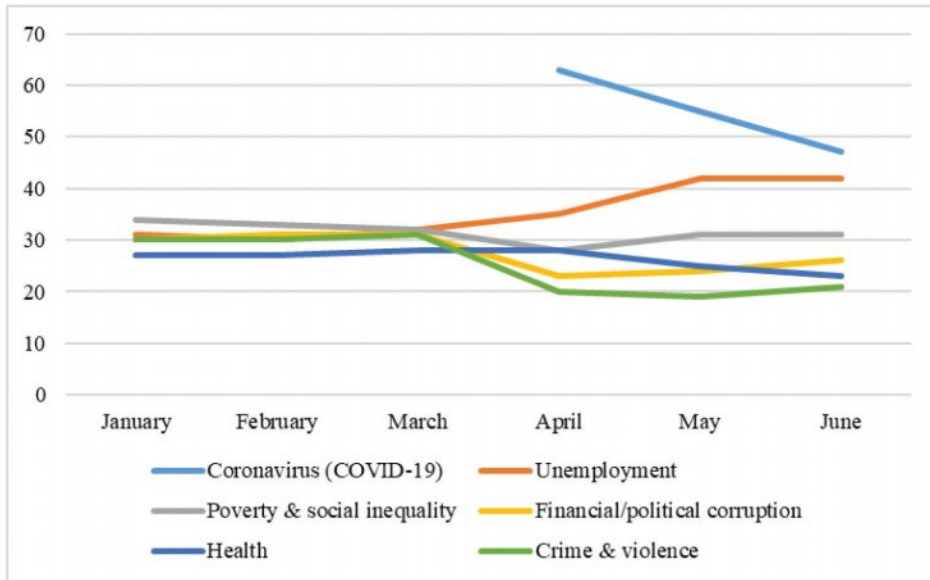


Figure no. 6: World worries 2020<sup>38</sup>

In 13 of the 27 analysed countries, COVID-19 is the main problem, even if in May and April it ranked first in 18 countries (out of 24 surveyed countries). The following concerns are of economic and political nature and are the first three selections on the most worrying issues in the European countries analysed above: *unemployment, poverty and social inequality, financial/political corruption*<sup>39</sup>.

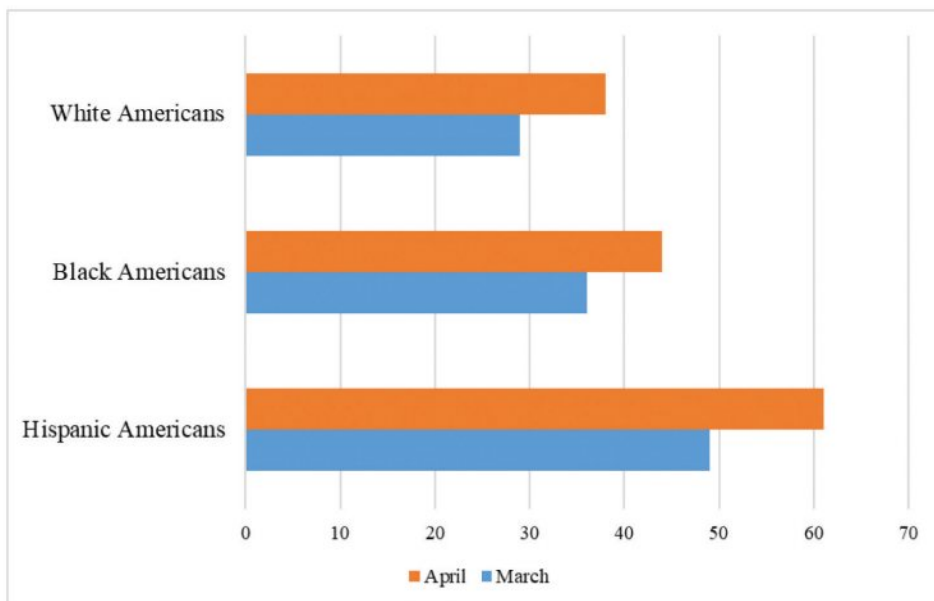
These are elements that *may increase the perception of social distance between various classes*, and this type of social distance, not the one mistaken for physical distance, *can lead to the onset of social protest movements*. For instance, in countries where large-scale protests have taken place with the stated aim of giving up the measures restricting individual rights and freedoms (France, Spain, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Poland), it is observed in most cases the correspondence between preponderance of negative emotions (uncertainty, helplessness, frustration, fear, anger) and dissatisfaction with the measures taken by governments to manage the crisis, although, paradoxically, the general opinion is that the restriction of individual freedoms is justified by the fight against the pandemic.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem.*

## 2.2. Social distance induced by discrimination

In the case of the United States, anti-lockdown protests were followed by wide anti-racism movements caused by George Floyd's death, which spread to other countries, such as Germany, France, UK, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Denmark, Hungary and so on.<sup>40</sup>. The killing of G. Floyd was only the trigger, because the basis of social distance induced by racial and ethnic discrimination was already perceived as a major problem long before this event and the pandemic broke out. Thus, the analysis of the data collected by the PEW Research Centre shows that the financial impact of COVID-19 varies greatly depending on race and ethnicity (figure no. 7)<sup>41</sup>.



**Figure no. 7:** Percentage of adult Hispanic, African-Americans and white Americans who say they or someone in the household have lost their job or taken a pay cut due to the coronavirus outbreak, according to the PEW Research Centre<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Alessio Dellanna and Alasdair Sandford, ““No to racism!”: Statues targeted as George Floyd anti-racism protests spread across Europe”, *Euro News*, 08.06.2020, URL: <https://www.euronews.com/2020/06/07/no-to-racism-protests-after-george-floyd-killing-spread-across-europe>, accessed on 10.06.2020.

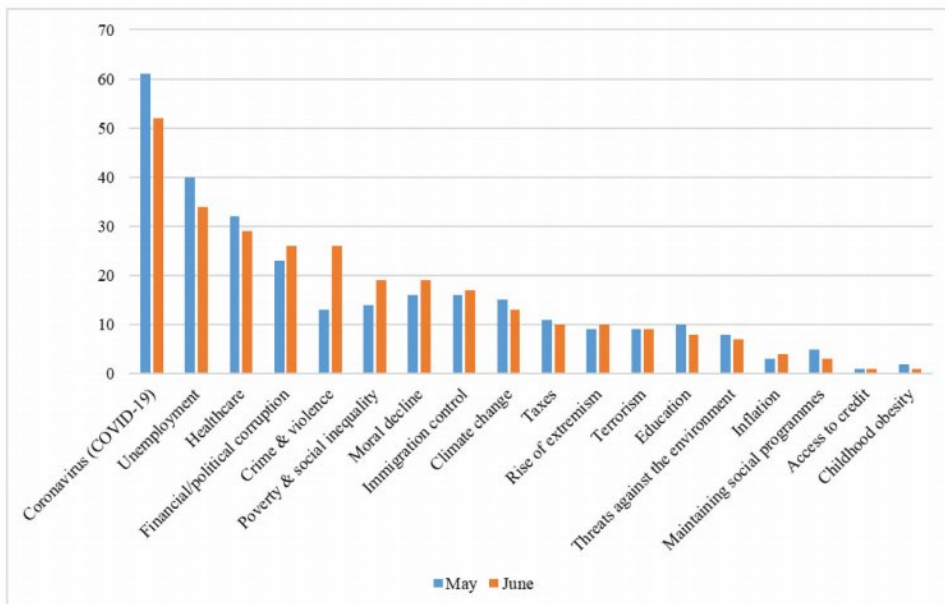
<sup>41</sup> Mark Hugo Lopez, Lee Rainie, Abby Budiman, “Financial and health impacts of COVID-19 vary widely by race and ethnicity”, *PEW Research Center*, 05.05.2020, URL: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/05/05/financial-and-health-impacts-of-covid-19-vary-widely-by-race-and-ethnicity/>, accessed on 20.06.2020.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*.



This study identifies five key correlations between race, ethnicity and the COVID-19 crisis: job and wage loss due to COVID-19 have hit Hispanic adults the hardest, followed by African-Americans; most Hispanic and African-Americans do not have financial reserves to cover expenses in case of an emergency; the same two groups of Americans are the most affected by the economic impact of the pandemic, being harder for them to pay their monthly bills; there are sharp racial and ethnic differences in personal experiences with COVID-19 and in concerns about spreading or catching the virus; Hispanic and African-Americans are more likely to admit cell phone tracking is acceptable in efforts to fight the virus<sup>43</sup>.

While COVID-19 was one of the most important concerns in the US, in May and June 2020 (Figure no. 8)<sup>44</sup>, regarding the racial and ethnic structure of the American population, concerns that contracting the disease and that they can unknowingly spread it are more common among African-American and Hispanic adults than among white adults (Figure no. 9)<sup>45</sup>.



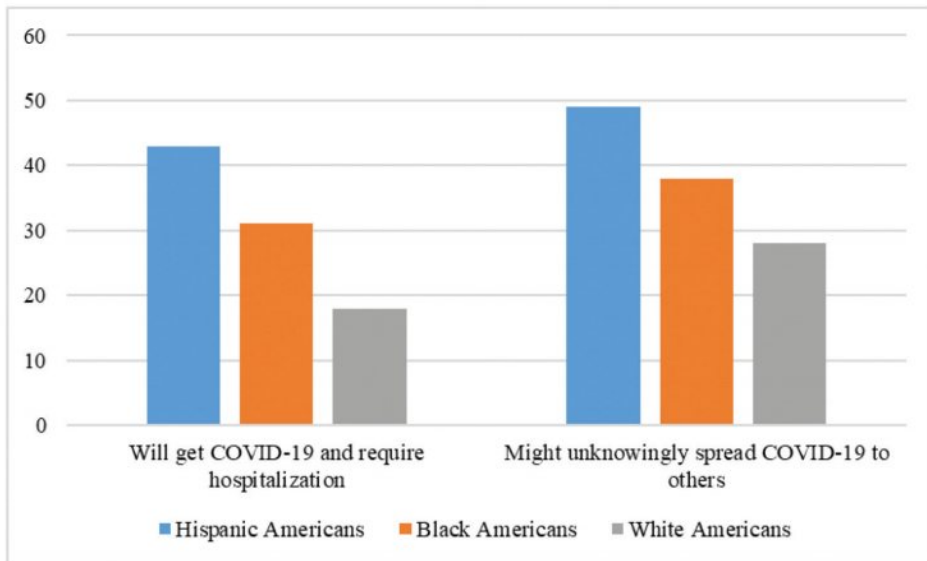
**Figure no. 8:** Answer to the question “Which three of the following topic do you find the most worrying in your country?” (% , June 2020)<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*.

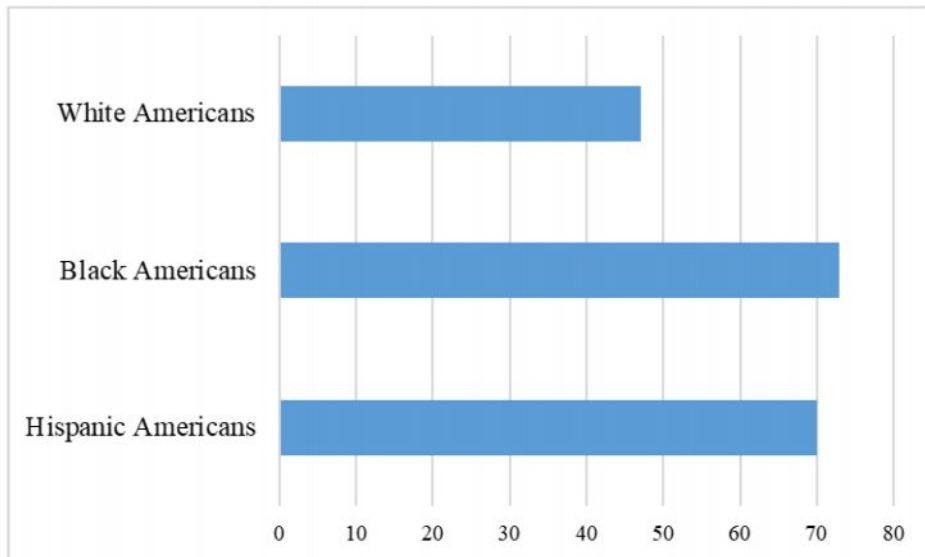
<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>45</sup> Carroll Doherty, Jocelyn Kiley, Nida Asheer, “Health Concerns from COVID-19 Much Higher among Hispanics and Blacks than Whites”, 14.04.2020, *PEW Research Center*, URL: <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/04/14/health-concerns-from-covid-19-much-higher-among-hispanics-and-blacks-than-whites/>, accessed on 20.06.2020.

<sup>46</sup> \*\*\*, “What Worries the World”, *Ipsos*, June 2020, URL: <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/>



**Figure no. 9:** Racial differences in concerns over contracting and spreading COVID-19 (% who say they are very concerned that they...)<sup>47</sup>



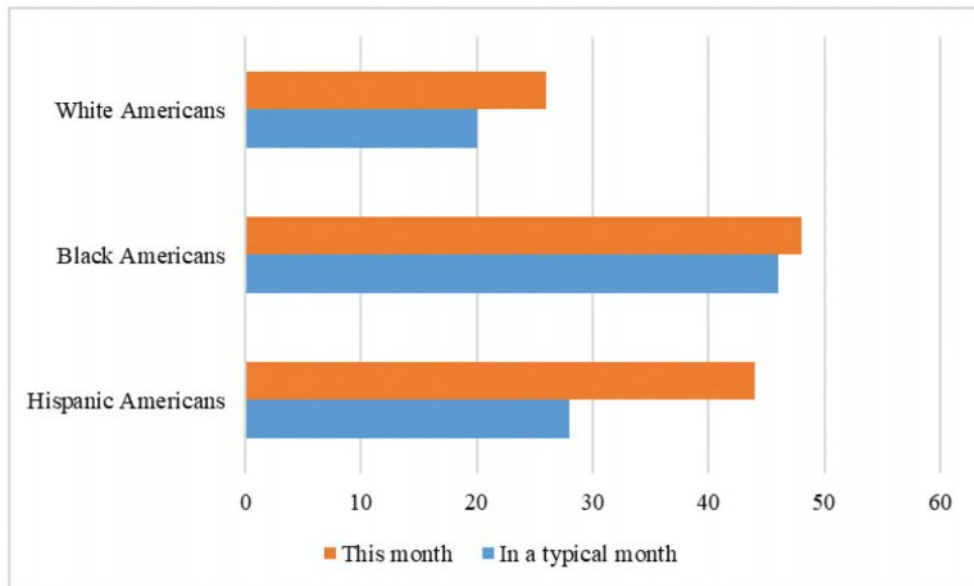
**Figure no. 10:** Percent of Hispanic, black and white Americans who said in April 2020 they do not have rainy day funds to cover expenses for three months in case of emergency<sup>48</sup>

ct/news/ documents/2020-06/node-688346-689151.zip, accessed on 01.07.2020.

<sup>47</sup> Carroll Doherty, Jocelyn Kiley, Nida Asheer, *op. cit.*, 14.04.2020.

<sup>48</sup> Mark Hugo Lopez, Lee Rainie, Abby Budiman, *op. cit.*, 05.05.2020.





**Figure no. 11:** Percent of Hispanic, black and white Americans who said in April 2020 they cannot pay all of their bills in full...<sup>49</sup>

The same difference is present in terms of the general opinion on the importance of economic problems (Figure no. 8) and economic difficulties during the pandemic (Figures no. 10 and 11): Hispanic and black population feel more acute effects of government measures to manage pandemic.

It is noted that, *in the case of the US, the social distance induced by discrimination on ethnic and racial grounds is accompanied by insecurity and anxiety generated by the economic problems which are exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis.* Race consciousness is strengthened by class consciousness, which determines the awareness, often sudden, of the distance that seems to separate some races/classes from other races/classes. In the case of the US, systemic racism<sup>50</sup> was emphasized by the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, which intensified the negative emotional status, a consequence of the insecurity felt at the level of the individuals and social groups.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>50</sup> \*\*\*, “United Nations Stands with Those Fighting ‘Today’s Sacred Battle’ against Systemic Racism, Deputy-Secretary-General Tells Human Rights Council”, *UN*, 17.06.2020, URL: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/dsgsm1421.doc.htm>, accessed on 20.06.2020.



## Conclusions

While maintaining *physical distance* may be a necessity and part of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis management, the request to maintain *social distance* may seem inappropriate in the eyes of a socio-humanities expert for at least two reasons: one related to psychology and sociology and another to nowadays social reality.

First, from a theoretical point of view, the definition of social distance is different from that of physical distance, as we have explained in the first section of this paper. Even if in the medical domain the demarcation line between these two types of distances is not clear, the early sociological sources justify to say that, in terms of pandemic crisis management, the term *physical distance* is the appropriate one. In fact, even the WHO has stated that the reshaping of discourse is needed in order to eliminate the terminological confusion.

Secondly, the above analysis indicates that social distance does really exist and has been exacerbated by the social and economic crisis generated by the pandemic. It was induced not only by psychological, social and economic causes, basically by the perceived insecurity as a result of the change in lifestyle and its quality, but also by racial and ethnic discrimination triggered by an event with profound racist and ethnocentrists implications (the death of the American G. Floyd).

The dangers that arise are complex: from the outbreak of a new pandemic wave (favoured by shortcutting the rule of physical distance in large protests, in several countries) to the rise of right-wing extremist groups (in response to both the implementation of pandemic crisis management measures aimed at limiting individual rights and freedoms, and to anti-racism social movements around the world). The latter is all the more serious as, in recent years, nationalist tendencies and the denial of liberal democracy, as a political ideology and a form of government corresponding to the needs of contemporary society, have become more and more pronounced, at least at European level.

Therefore, to summarize the impact of the pandemic on the societal sector, we can say that *physical distance is the solution for managing the health crisis, while social distance is a cause in itself of other crises that may become systemic.*



# EUROPEAN DEFENCE – CHANGE OF COURSE IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

*Cristina BOGZEANU, PhD\**

By the end of 2019, several health professionals from one of the Chinese provinces were warning that they were facing a new type of pneumonia, much more contagious and much more aggressive than the ones seen before. What initially seemed an unfortunate phenomenon, taking place in a space far away from us, has become one of the greatest strategic shocks in contemporary history in the entire world, Europe included. By the second half of 2020, SARS-CoV-2 pandemic accounted for 2,728,059 confirmed cases and 197,874 deaths in Europe<sup>1</sup>. Health systems whose capacity to manage the large number of illnesses and critical cases was run down, the acute lack of medical supplies and equipment needed by all European states, the lockdown of some regions and even some states, closed borders, the restriction of civil liberties were all unimaginable aspects of our lives so far, but which all Europeans have known throughout this year. To all this, there is also the prospect of one of the worst world's economic and financial crises, the certainty of which no one doubts, and only the magnitude it will have is still being studied and debated<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> \*\*\*, *Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Situation Report – 163*, 1 July 2020, URL: [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200701-covid-19-sitrep-163.pdf?sfvrsn=c202f05b\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200701-covid-19-sitrep-163.pdf?sfvrsn=c202f05b_2), accessed on 02.07.2020.

<sup>2</sup> For details, see: Cristian Băhnăreanu, “Statele Unite ale Americii, Europa și China în pragul unei inevitabile crize economice”, in: Florian Cîrciumaru, *Evaluare Strategică 2019: Tendințe ale securității înainte de noua provocare Covid*, “Carol I” National Defence University, Bucharest, 2020, pp. 48-70, URL: [https://cssas.unap.ro/ro/pdf\\_studii/evaluare\\_strategica\\_2019.pdf](https://cssas.unap.ro/ro/pdf_studii/evaluare_strategica_2019.pdf), accessed on 04.07.2020.



Basically, coronavirus pandemic has been affecting security in all its dimensions and at all levels, creating, at individual level, feelings of fear and uncertainty, unknown to Europeans for several generations. At the same time, at the national and supranational levels, we are witnessing major efforts to limit the spread of the virus and the disastrous economic effects of the pandemic.

The health crisis has hit Europe when the EU was already facing the process of a member state withdrawal, to which it is added a refugee crisis protracting for almost five years, with member states constantly violating the rule of law – a principle assumed in the context of accession –, with disinformation actions by the Russian Federation and tense relations with this state, with an increasingly difficult relation with the American strategic partner, with the rise of nationalist far right parties, often Eurosceptic to the governance of its member states.

The last 50 years of history have created a strongly interconnected world not only in terms of ease of communication and travel, but especially in terms of the global spread of crises, security challenges and, more recently, division. No matter how strong and rational the arguments in favour of cooperation for a common good and against common threats, the international community fails to come up with a coherent response. “What kills us is not the connection, but the connection without cooperation. And the cure is not isolation, but an even deeper connection, that kind of connection that can sustain collective action. Doctors and scientists around the world have acted differently: they have tried to reach out to each other, brought their talents and resources together, and demonstrated what a global community should look like”<sup>3</sup>.

Given the dynamics of the international security environment, as well as the trends set at European and Euro-Atlantic level, through this paper, we aim to estimate the impact of the strategic shock represented by the coronavirus pandemic on European defence within the EU institutional framework. For this, however, we consider it appropriate to briefly review EU’s action in the health crisis context, given that it has been blamed for inaction, inefficiency, disengagement, and the way in which the EU and its member states have managed the crisis was called to predict and argue the very disintegration of the organization<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Gideon Rose, “What’s Inside. What is killing us is not connection; it is connection without cooperation”, in *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2020, URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/issue-packages/2020-06-03/world-after-pandemic>, accessed on 02.07. 2020.

<sup>4</sup> David M. Herszenhorn, Sarah Wheaton, “How Europe failed the coronavirus test. Contagion’s Spread is a story of complacency, overconfidence and lack of preparation”, in *Politico.eu*, 10 April 2020, URL: [article/coronavirus-europe-failed-the-test/](https://www.politico.eu/article/coronavirus-europe-failed-the-test/); Dalibor Rohac, “Coronavirus Could Break the EU. The Epidemic’s Economy Shock Could Easily Exceed that of the 2008 Financial Crisis”, in *Politico.eu*, 16 March 2020, URL: <https://www.politico.eu/article/coronavirus-covid19-public-health-crisis-could-break-the-eu-european-union/>; Jennifer Rankin, “Coronavirus Could Be the Last Straw for EU, European Experts Warn”, in *The Guardian*, 1 April 2020, URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/01/coronavirus-eu-experts-warn>.



## 1. Managing the Pandemic Effects within EU. Between Isolation and Solidarity

The reaction of the European Union in the pandemic context has been widely debated, and the image created was, at least in the first instance, that of slowness, lack of coordination and inability to act<sup>5</sup>. Among the best known, relevant and frequently cited examples in this regard is Italy. One of the first and most severely affected by COVID-19 European countries, Italy has exhausted the capacity of its health system and medical equipment since February 2020. Under these circumstances, Rome requested support from the other member states on February 26<sup>th</sup>, trying to make use of the European Civil Protection Mechanism. Although the European Commission forwarded Italy's request to EU member states, Italy received aid only since March 10<sup>th</sup>.

Thus, it was initially created the image of a divided Europe, in which institutions in Brussels did not coordinate a coherent response to the pandemic and the member states did not support each other. However, the idea reflects only partially the European reaction and it must be analysed both in the context of the first half of 2020 and in relation to the tasks assumed by the EU through the Treaty in such situations. To this end, we consider it useful to return to the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon: “**Union action**, which **shall complement national policies**, shall be directed towards improving public health, preventing physical and mental illness and diseases, and obviating sources of danger to physical and mental health. Such action shall cover the fight against the major health scourges, by promoting research into their causes, their transmission and their prevention, as well as health information and education, and monitoring, early warning of and combating serious cross-border threats to health”<sup>6</sup> (Article 168, Title XIV. Public health).

The above excerpt unequivocally reflects the fact that, at EU level, the epidemics management is the primary responsibility of each member state. In the case of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the virus had a continental spread, with all states already in the position or waiting to be put in a position to manage a large

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ian.com/world/2020/apr/01/coronavirus-could-be-final-straw-for-eu-european-experts-warn; Efi Koutsokosta, Joanna Gill, “EU project in danger if no solidarity on coronavirus crisis, says economy chief Gentiloni”, in *Euronews*, 30 March 2020, URL: <https://www.euronews.com/2020/03/30/eu-project-in-danger-if-no-solidarity-on-coronavirus-crisis-says-economy-chief-gentiloni>, accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>5</sup> \*\*\*, “Coronavirusul deschide o nouă breșă în unitatea Uniunii Europene”, in *Agerpres*, 12 March 2020, URL: <https://www.agerpres.ro/politica-externa/2020/03/12/coronavirusul-deschide-o-noua-bresa-in-unitatea-uniunii-europene--464874>, accessed on 12.03.2020.

<sup>6</sup> \*\*\*, *Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union*, Brussels, 15 April 2008, URL: <https://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%206655%202008%20INIT>, accessed on 12.03.2020.



number of infections and to limit its spread as much as possible. Therefore, in the first instance, the European states had a rather reflexive reaction – protecting their own population – by all available means (limiting the export of medical equipment, imposing measures to isolate their own citizens from citizens of other states etc.). Thus, after overcoming this first phase, in which member states absorbed the initial shock of the pandemic, there were numerous mutual support initiatives between member states, as well as actual efforts of EU institutions to manage the health crisis not only on the European continent, but also in the regions in the close neighbourhood<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, the EU was one of the international players having responded to China’s need for medical equipment before the virus wreaked havoc on the European continent. The Union coordinated a response from its member states, consisting of 12 tons of medical equipment for China, starting with February 1<sup>st</sup>. Two weeks later, another 25 tons of medical equipment were delivered to China through the same Civil Protection Mechanism<sup>9</sup>.

Also, the European Commission coordinated the repatriation of European citizens, the acquisition and rebuilding of medical equipment stocks, financed research related to SARS-CoV-2, offered economic support measures for the most affected industries, ensuring the movement of goods by creating green corridors etc. Civil Protection Mechanism coordinated the support of Romania and Norway for the most affected region in Italy – Bergamo, consisting of teams of doctors and nurses<sup>10</sup>.

Another factor having contributed to the creation of this image of lack of solidarity is the fact that the pandemic overlapped with the period in which European states negotiated the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The close perspective of Britain completing the process of exiting the European institutional framework has come with increasing pressure on the Union’s members to make up for the loss of the UK’s financial contribution to EU’s budget. Since the end of last year, two groups of states have emerged, whose distinct views on the financial contribution already heralded a difficult negotiation of the medium-term budgetary framework, with compromises difficult to achieve. Thus, was formed a so-called group of the “moderates” (the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Austria)

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<sup>7</sup> For details on EU’s actions to coordinate the response to the health crisis, see: \*\*\*, *Timeline of EU Action*, European Commission, URL: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response/timeline-eu-action\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response/timeline-eu-action_en), accessed on 14.07.2020.

<sup>8</sup> \*\*\*, *Statement by Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič on EU support to China for the Coronavirus outbreak*, 1 February 2020, URL: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement\\_20\\_178](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_20_178), accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>9</sup> \*\*\*, *COVID-19: EU co-finances the delivery of more protective equipment to China*, 23 February 2020, URL: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_310](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_310), accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>10</sup> \*\*\*, *Timeline of EU Action*, doc. cit.





who opposed the increase of the financial contributions suggested by the rest of the states, led by France, the so-called “friends of cohesion”. The wide gap between member states’ views on how the British exit from the EU will be compensated for, as well as how can be maintained a balance between traditional policies (cohesion, agriculture) and new priorities (climate change, security and defence) led to the failure of a first budget proposal in February<sup>11</sup>.

The serious economic consequences of the measures taken to manage the pandemic further increased the tension of these negotiations, in particular by adding the need to formulate and agree on a plan to protect the European economy and of economic recovery. Disagreements between member states’ approaches also became noticeable in the official positions, the French President’s statements being an eloquent example in this direction. E. Macron warned that both the Union and the single currency will be in jeopardy if EU richer member states, such as Germany and the Netherlands, do not show more solidarity with the southern European countries seriously hit by the pandemic<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, he emphasized that a failure to financially support the European states seriously affected by the pandemic would favour the rise to power of the populists in Italy, Spain, and even France. The outcome of the debates was, in fact, a show of financial solidarity at European level, with the member states agreeing on the need for an economic recovery plan, which is aimed primarily at the states most stricken by the pandemic<sup>13</sup>.

Against the background of recent years’ trends (with reference to information warfare) and of the COVID-19 pandemic shock, both EU measures to manage the effects of the health crisis and the negotiations on the multiannual financial framework or the reluctance of some rich EU countries to pay common debts to support the most affected states have become one of the most fertile grounds for misinformation or fake news fabrication by third parties, especially the Russian Federation and China. Beyond conspiracy theories or erroneous medical advice, according to European External Action Service (EEAS) monthly reports, the main topics covered were the following: a) the EU has failed to manage the pandemic and is on the verge of collapse; b) the EU is selfish and betrays its own values;

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<sup>11</sup> V. M., “Eșec la summitul dedicat viitorului buget UE/Merkel: “Diferențele sunt încă prea mari pentru a ajunge la un acord””, in *Hotnews*, 21 February 2020, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-23677204-summitul-dedicat-viitorului-buget-multianual-uniunii-incheiat-fara-acord-surse.htm>, accessed on 21.02.2020.

<sup>12</sup> Victor Mallet, Roula Khalaf, “FT Interview: Emmanuel Macron says it is time to think the unthinkable”, in *Financial Times*, 16 April 2020, URL: <https://www.ft.com/content/3ea8d790-7fd1-11ea-8fdb-7ec06edeef84>, accessed on 16.04.2020.

<sup>13</sup> \*\*\*, “Bugetul UE multianual va cuprinde și un fond destinat redresării țărilor afectate de pandemie”, in *Radio Europa Liberă*, 13 May 2020, URL: <https://romania.europalibera.org/a/bugetul-ue-multianual-va-cuprinde-%C8%99i-un-fond-de-redresare-economic%C4%83-anti-covid/30610579.html>, accessed on 13.05.2020.



c) Russia and China are responsible powers; d) the EU exploits the crisis in its own interest<sup>14</sup>. Also, EEAS May report notes that fake news on this topic have remained, but their frequency has decreased compared to the peak months of the pandemic (March-April)<sup>15</sup>, in the first half of 2020. Trends presented in these analyses on misinformation and fake news campaigns signal high level of readiness of those state actors to react quickly, speculating on the best moments.

However, in general, regarding in parallel the EU tasks, as stipulated in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and the measures taken in the context of the pandemic, we can conclude that Brussels acted in this situation in full accordance with the responsibilities assumed by the Treaty. At all events, under the conditions described, the question arises to what extent the image of European citizens towards the EU has been affected, and to what extent has been created a vision according to which the EU could have contributed more to crisis management and what are the consequences of this state of affairs.

The *European Council on Foreign Relations* (ECFR) coordinated a study on the European citizens' perception on the effectiveness of the EU and on the impact on their support for the European institutions<sup>16</sup>. The study, which took place in April 2020 in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Poland, Sweden, Portugal, Bulgaria and Denmark, illustrates that the majority of citizens surveyed believe that their country has been left to fend for itself in the context of the pandemic<sup>17</sup>. However, when asked how the pandemic experience has changed their attitude towards the EU, most of them (63%) answered that more cooperation is needed in the EU, while 18% believe that integration has gone too far, and 20% answered that they do not know<sup>18</sup>. In this line of thought, an increased relevance can be attributed to the responses offered by Italians: the only case in which 28% of respondents said that their state was not helped during the peak of the pandemic, 25% believe that the Chinese state was the main ally in the fight against the disease, while only 4% said that their main ally was the EU.

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<sup>14</sup> \*\*\*, *EEAS Special Report Update: Short Assessment of Narratives and Disinformation around the COVID-19 Pandemic*, 1 April 2020, URL: <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/eeas-special-report-update-short-assessment-of-narratives-and-disinformation-around-the-covid-19-pandemic/>, accessed on 02.04.2020.

<sup>15</sup> \*\*\*, *EEAS Special Report Update: Short Assessment of Narratives and Disinformation around the COVID-19 Pandemic*, 20 May 2020, URL: <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/eeas-special-report-update-short-assessment-of-narratives-and-disinformation-around-the-covid19-pandemic-updated-23-april-18-may/>, accessed on 21.05.2020.

<sup>16</sup> Susi Dennison, Pawel Zerka, *Together in Trauma: Europeans and the World after Covid-19*, European Council on Foreign Relations, June 2020, URL: [https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/together\\_in\\_trauma\\_europeans\\_and\\_the\\_world\\_after\\_covid\\_19](https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/together_in_trauma_europeans_and_the_world_after_covid_19), accessed on 20.06. 2020.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 5.



Given the data provided by the European Commission on the response to the crisis, one could easily reason out the *strategic communication* weight in such contexts. EU's response to Italy came at a slow pace and was overshadowed by the support provided by China<sup>19</sup>, which had been the recipient of European aid just a month before. At least as relevant in this regard is that Russia has provided Italy with military medical equipment, disinfection teams and virologists<sup>20</sup>.

Furthermore, beyond the implications on the European citizens' support for the European institutions, in terms of European solidarity, and for the vision of European citizens and member states towards it, the experience of the first half of 2020 reflects another aspect – *what European institutions do not communicate efficiently is fully exploited by third parties, for their own benefit*.

## 2. European Defence – Still a Priority?

The pandemic has neither ended, nor shaded away the power competition worldwide, or the crises and conflicts with trans-regional effects. On the contrary. The context created by what we can call one of the worst humanity crises in contemporary history has not led to the end of the struggle for power and influence. With regard to European security, it is notable that conflicting relations continued in the Mediterranean Sea, where the exploitation of hydrocarbons is still one of the sources of strained relations between Turkey and Cyprus. Moreover, the incident in June, between a French ship engaged in a NATO mission and a Turkish one, reflects the level of tensions not only in the region, but also between allies. Libya continues to be highly unstable due to the fighting between the two rival factions trying to gain control of the state, and Syria remains the scene of violent conflicts<sup>21</sup>. In addition, the prospect of a military escalation of the US-Iran conflict is emerging. At the same time, Turkey maintains a difficult ally and partner status, trying to blackmail

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<sup>19</sup> \*\*\*, “China a anunțat că trimite în Italia, grav afectată de epidemia de coronavirus, experți și materiale”, in *Digi24*, 12 March 2020, URL: <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/mapamond/china-a-anuntat-ca-trimite-in-italia-grav-afectata-de-epidemia-de-coronavirus-experti-si-materiale-1274316>; Andrei Stan, “China trimite provizii medicale esențiale în Italia”, in *Hotnews*, 14 March 2020, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-coronavirus-23723193-china-trimite-provizii-medicale-esentiale-italia.htm>; \*\*\*, “China ajută Italia cu 30 de aparate de ventilare și mii de costume și măști de protecție”, in *Mediafax*, 17 March 2020, URL: <https://www.mediafax.ro/social/china-ajuta-italia-cu-30-de-aparate-de-ventilare-si-mii-de-costume-si-masti-de-protectie-18994190>, accessed on 20.06.2020.

<sup>20</sup> Gabriel Negreanu, “Armata rusă trimite militari și echipamente în Italia. Premierul Giuseppe Conte a cerut ajutor”, in *Mediafax*, 22 March 2020, URL: <https://www.mediafax.ro/externe/armata-rusa-trimite-militari-si-echipamente-in-italia-premierul-giuseppe-conte-a-cerut-ajutor-19010375>, accessed on 03.04.2020.

<sup>21</sup> For details, see: Mirela Atanasiu, “Evoluția războaielor civile din Orientul Mijlociu și Africa de Nord”, in: Florian Cîrciumaru, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-138.



the EU, capitalizing on its key role in managing the migrant crisis<sup>22</sup>. In the East, the conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation is nowhere near finishing and developments confirm its compliance to the model of frozen conflicts, despite France's recent efforts to negotiate an agreement between the parties.

Above all, there is US-China strategic competition, the relative decline of US power in the international arena, and the tendency to abandon the principles of international multilateralism. One of the latest instances of this trend is Washington's decision to withdraw from the World Health Organization in the midst of a pandemic, on the grounds that it is controlled by Beijing<sup>23</sup>. Moreover, as far as US-Europe security and defence relation is concerned, we can talk about a difficult relationship, marked by US President mercantilist approach and constant pressure to increase the financial contribution to the NATO budget, as well as efforts to strengthen relations with the Russian Federation, although Moscow's actions in Europe's vicinity pose serious security risks for actors in this area. However, it is noteworthy that despite the position and rhetoric adopted by the US President, NATO has continued to carry out its core tasks<sup>24</sup>.

For European security, all these imply an unprecedented uncertainty in the recent history of the continent, raising risks and threats that European actors cannot manage, solely on a unilateral approach based on national practices.

As far as the EU is concerned, security and defence dimension has had a rather reactive development than a proactive one. Ever since understanding the organization's inability to manage crises in the immediate vicinity in the context of the wars that led to the break-up of the Yugoslav federation, progress in this area has been recorded in response to an external stimulus, mainly to the emergence of security risks and threats. However, given EU organizational specificity, developments in this area are linked to member states' willingness and capacity to fund this area. This characteristic of EU security and defence is very significant given that the strong impact on the economic and social dimension of the pandemic makes it very possible for security and defence to move into a distant plan of budgetary priorities at European level.

Thus, one of the major questions that arises in the post-pandemic international and regional context is whether increasing the level of instability, insecurity and

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<sup>22</sup> For details, see: Alexandra Sarcinschi, "Solidaritate sau dezbinare? Rolul Turciei și Italiei în gestionarea crizei refugiaților și migranților în Europa", in: Florian Cîrciumaru (Editor), *op. cit.*, pp. 103-124.

<sup>23</sup> Violeta Gheorghe, "SUA încetează relația cu OMS, anunță Donald Trump", in *Agerpres*, 29 May 2020, URL: <https://www.agerpres.ro/politica-externa/2020/05/29/sua-inceteaza-relatia-cu-oms-anunta-donald-trump--514929>, accessed on 29.05.2020.

<sup>24</sup> Douglas Lute, Nicholas Burns, *NATO at Seventy. An Alliance in Crisis*, Harvard Kenedy School, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, February 2019, URL: <https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/NATOatSeventy.pdf>, accessed on 20.06.2020.



uncertainty at the international level will remain a stimulus strong enough for the EU to continue implementing its defence development initiatives or the economic repercussions of the health crisis will act as a brake in this respect.

Over the last four years, the issue of the Union's security and defence has been a hotly debated topic, with opinions ranging from the creation of a European army to the impossibility of developing this project at EU level. Brexit, the issue of a new EU security strategy with a high emphasis on hard power, the maintenance of strained relations with the Russian Federation, the frequent disagreements between Washington and European allies over the financial contribution to European security have been the major coordinates for discussing ways to develop defence capacity. Moreover, European defence project benefits of great support at the level of the member states, especially of the two largest economic powers of the organization (France and Germany), although their views on their implications do not entirely coincide<sup>25</sup>.

Since 2016, the EU has launched a series of initiatives to support member states in achieving their security and defence goals: Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), and the European Defence Fund (EDF). The creation of this fund is significant for the intention to increase integration in the field of defence, as it is managed by the European Commission, i.e. the European institutional forum that ensures the implementation of EU policies. EDF can also be used to support capabilities development projects under the auspices of PESCO. Despite this effort, the EU has not yet been able to develop a basis of capabilities or the level of preparedness needed to launch military operations. Moreover, the estimate by the International Institute for Strategic Studies is that "current modernisation and spending trends make it unlikely that EU member states will be able to close their capability gaps within the next decade"<sup>26</sup>.

In late 2019, a new European Commission was established, under the leadership of former German Defence Minister, Ursula von der Leyen. In one of her first speeches, the new President of the European Commission announced her intention to make it a "geopolitical" one<sup>27</sup>. Statements such as that of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy ("Europe must learn the language of power"<sup>28</sup>) or of the French President ("Europe must learn to think and

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<sup>25</sup> For details regarding the convergences and divergences in French and German visions on strategic autonomy, see: Cristina Bogzeanu, "Europa: (in)adaptarea la condițiile unui sistem internațional competitiv. De la criza democrației liberale la tendințe în Politica Externă și de securitate comună", in: Florian Cîrciumaru (Editor), *op. cit.*, pp. 82-91.

<sup>26</sup> \*\*\*, *The Military Balance 2020*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2020, p. 69.

<sup>27</sup> Matei Vișniec, "Ursula von der Leyen și noua sa Comisie europeană 'geopolitică'", in *RFI România*, 27 November 2019, URL: <https://www.rfi.ro/special-paris-116344-ursula-von-derleyen-si-noua-sa-comisie-europeana-geopolitica>, accessed on 10.12.2019.

<sup>28</sup> Florin Ștefan, "Europa trebuie să învețe „limbajul puterii”, susține candidatul la postul de șef al





act (...) as a strategic power”<sup>29</sup>) outline the picture a common understanding at EU level regarding the need to adapt to a competitive international environment and to develop the necessary tools.

A recent development, with a high relevance for the European defence development on the medium term, is related to 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) negotiation. An analysis based on “follow the money” principle of EU budgetary priorities may reflect the extent to which the development of the military dimension of EU power is or is not a priority for Brussels. As EU member states have not agreed on the final version of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework by the end of the first half of 2020, we will take as a benchmark in our analysis the European Commission’s proposal of 27 May 2020<sup>30</sup>, which we will analyse in parallel with 2014-2020 MFF<sup>31</sup>, focusing on the main areas budgeted by Brussels (Table no. 1).

Although the European Commission’s proposals will certainly be negotiated and will not have the same budget in the final version of the 2021-2027MFF, they are relevant because they indicate, without a doubt, the EU’s short and medium-term priorities. Among these, we consider significant wording of the chapters *Migration and border management, resilience, security and defence, neighbourhood and the whole world*, all including, more or less explicitly, the security and defence dimension. Although the area of *Resilience, Security and Defence* is less budgeted compared to the other chapters and, in addition, the final version of the plan is expected to contain an even lower budget allocation, its very presence in this multiannual financial framework clearly reflects the commitment to its development. Moreover, the Commission’s proposal also calls for strong support for European strategic autonomy and security, by increasing the Internal Security Fund to € 2.2 billion and strengthening the European Defence Fund to € 8 billion<sup>32</sup>.

According to the predictions of most institutions in the field, the pandemic will be followed by a global financial crisis, the magnitude of which depends on the

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<sup>29</sup> \*\*\*, “The future of the EU. Emanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead”, in *The Economist*, 7 November 2019, URL: <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europenato-is-becoming-brain-dead>, accessed on 29.05.2020.

<sup>30</sup> \*\*\*, *Communication from the Commission. The EU budget powering the recovery plan for Europe*, 27 May 2020, URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0442%20&from=EN>, accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>31</sup> \*\*\*, *Long-term EU budget 2014-2020*, EU Council, URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/the-eu-budget/long-term-eu-budget-2014-2020/>, accessed on 25.06.2020.

<sup>32</sup> \*\*\*, *Communication from the Commission. The EU budget powering the recovery plan for Europe*, 27 May 2020, URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0442%20&from=EN>, accessed on 10.06.2020.





**Table no. 1:** Comparison between the main budgetary chapters of 2014-2020 MFF and European Commission proposal for 2021-2027 MFF

2014-2020 MFF	MFF 2021-2027 European Commission Proposal
<b>1. Smart and inclusive growth</b> (competitiveness for economic growth and jobs: € 125,61 billion; economic, social and territorial cohesion: € 324.94 billion)	<b>1. Single market, innovation and digital</b> € 210.5 billion
<b>2. Sustainable growth: natural resources</b> (common agricultural policy, common fisheries policy, environmental action) € 372.93 billion	<b>2. Cohesion and values</b> € 984.5 billion
<b>3. Security and citizenship</b> (asylum and migration, external borders, internal security) € 15.67 billion	<b>3. Natural resources and environment</b> € 402 billion
<b>4. Global Europe</b> (humanitarian aid, development assistance) € 58.70 billion	<b>4. Migration and border management</b> € 31.1 billion
<b>5. Administration</b> € 61.63 billion	<b>5. Resilience, security and defence</b> € 29.1 billion
<b>6. Compensations</b> (agreed in 2014 for creating the necessary conditions for Croatia to not contribute to EU budget more than it benefits from it) € 27 million	<b>6. Neighbourhood and the World</b> € 118.2 billion
	<b>7. European Public Administration</b> € 74.6 billion

number of SARS-Cov-2 infections waves, but also on the effectiveness of measures taken to manage economic effects<sup>33</sup>. Given the devastating effect of 2008 global economic and financial crisis on defence budgets at European level, it is expected that the security and defence budgetary allocation at EU level would be low. In fact, the loss of key capability development programs, such as military mobility, one of the flagship defence initiatives, which has met with little disagreement at European level, is already anticipated<sup>34</sup>.

Another factor to consider is the EU image of European citizens, especially the path the EU should take, given that this may be reflected in their future

<sup>33</sup> \*\*\*, *OECD Economic Outlook 2020*, Issue 1, No. 107, OECD Publishing, Paris, pp. 191-195, URL: [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/oecd-economic-outlook/volume-2020/issue-1\\_0d1d1e2e-en#page4](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/oecd-economic-outlook/volume-2020/issue-1_0d1d1e2e-en#page4); World Bank, European Union Overview, Last updated 17 April 2020, URL: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/eu/overview>, accessed on 20.06.2020.

<sup>34</sup> Daniel Fiott, “Will European Defence Survive Coronavirus?”, 27 March 2020, Elcano Royal Institute, URL: [http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano\\_en/contenido?WCM\\_GLOBAL\\_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano\\_in/zonas\\_in/commentary-fiott-will-european-defence-survive-coronavirus](http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/commentary-fiott-will-european-defence-survive-coronavirus); Alexandra Brzozowski, “Europe’s Military Mobility: Latest Casualty of the EU Budget Battle”, in *Euractiv.com*, 25 February 2020, URL: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/europes-military-mobility-latest-casualty-of-eu-budget-battle/>, accessed on 20.04.2020.



political options. In reference to the ECFR study on how Europeans perceived cooperation between state actors and the support received in the pandemic context, it is relevant that their responses show that they felt alone (views on the US, the Russian Federation and China), at the same time considering that nor the European institutions did enough to help them. But, very importantly, their responses reflect, as a consequence, an awareness regarding potential crises and increased support for strengthening cooperation within the EU, for coordinated and coherent EU action so that it can cope with global threats<sup>35</sup>.

Overall, the current circumstances include factors that can stimulate and foster deeper cooperation in the field of defence at EU level, but also issues that can turn into obstacles with the capacity to delay the implementation of projects in this area.

**Table no. 2:** SWOT analysis on EU security and defence development

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- European initiatives in the field of EU capability development: Capability Development Plan, PESCO, CARD, EDF;</li><li>- EUGS 2016 – the first EU strategic document developed, with a strong emphasis on hard power.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Developing Eurosceptic political currents, with effects on EU cohesion and, implicitly, on the political will needed to develop capabilities;</li><li>-If the MFF significantly reduces the budget for EDF, military mobility and space programs could be cancelled.</li><li>-Different views of European actors (especially France and Germany) on the implications of strategic autonomy (increasing strategic independence from the US vs. increasing the EU’s ability to take on greater defence responsibilities).</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- European leaders who support and drive the development of this dimension;</li><li>- Assumption by the European Commission of a “geopolitical role”;</li><li>- International system is still conflictual and there is an increasing competition for power – ability to support and drive defence initiatives, including in the field of capabilities;</li><li>- Current of opinion that European cooperation needs to be improved.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The economic crisis predicted in the next period, which could reduce defence expenditures;</li><li>- Information warfare actions aimed at reducing confidence in European project viability;</li><li>-The increasingly strong link between far-right nationalist leaders in Europe and the Russian Federation;</li><li>-US reluctant attitude towards European initiatives for developing military capabilities;</li><li>-In the post-pandemic period, defence budgets are likely to decline.</li></ul>

<sup>35</sup> Susi Dennison, Pawel Zerka, *Together in Trauma: Europeans and the World after Covid-19*, European Council on Foreign Relations, June 2020, URL: [https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/together\\_in\\_trauma\\_europeans\\_and\\_the\\_world\\_after\\_covid\\_19](https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/together_in_trauma_europeans_and_the_world_after_covid_19), accessed on 20.06.2020.



A SWOT analysis of the factors that may support or encourage EU defence initiatives, in particular in developing the capabilities needed to achieve strategic autonomy (Table no. 2) reveals that that EU's weaknesses as well as threats making it difficult to continue are more numerous compared to their strengths and opportunities. As a consequence, the EU shall be expected to move in this direction at a slow pace in the short and medium term, but maintaining its aspiration to form a basis of capabilities needed to achieve the capacity to act in defence matters.

### Conclusions

This paper analyses EU dynamics in terms of solidarity or lack of solidarity in the context of the pandemic in relation to the responsibilities assumed by the EU, and tries to estimate the extent to which the impact of the pandemic on European cohesion may affect further development of EU strategic autonomy. The conclusions of the approach can be summarized as follows:

**1. *The pandemic hit Europe in one of the most challenging times, when European solidarity was already being called into question by a number of trends in recent years*** – Brexit, member states' deviations from EU core values, the rise of far-right political parties at the leadership of some member states, dissensions with the American strategic partner, the difficulty of shaping a solid unitary vision on the EU's major directions (sometimes even between France and Germany), tense relations with Turkey, Ankara's blackmail strategy to EU, capitalizing on its crucial role in migration are just some of the issues that marked the EU's pre-pandemic course. The shock of the pandemic, as well as third parties' actions in the information domain have the potential to deepen the lack of cohesion at EU level. However, the same shock has the potential to foster deeper cooperation between member states, to deal with risks and threats that can only be managed together and by pooling the resources at their disposal in a coordinated way.

**2. *Negotiations, which often turned out to be difficult, regarding the multiannual financial framework or the economic recovery plan do not necessarily signal the lack of solidarity.*** Debate, disagreement, negotiation of solutions, all these have been constant and natural aspects throughout the existence of the Union. It is important to neither overbid nor underbid these phenomena. The use of official documents, the analysis of member states' interests and priorities can provide a much more objective picture of the extent to which disagreement at EU level also means a lack of solidarity.

**3. EU's reaction to the management of the strategic shock, when the pandemic hit Europe, was indeed a delayed one.** The main reason was that member states were either already facing a high number of infections or had focused their main efforts on preparing to deal with an almost certain nationwide health crisis. However, an



analysis of the available instruments, the responsibilities assumed by the Treaty and the measures taken reveal that the *actions coordinated by Brussels in managing the pandemic were in line with the institutional and financial capacity of the organization. However, the magnitude of the pandemic's effects made them seem or even be insufficient, a fact capitalized in the disinformation campaigns launched by the Russian Federation and China, in this context.*

4. The health crisis has reflected the *heavy weight of strategic communication* at both EU and national level. *What the European institutions do not communicate effectively is fully exploited by third parties for their own convenience.*

5. *European defence will most likely not experience accelerated development on the short term, but the commitment to its development, at least at the political level, is already consistent.* In addition, the initiatives already launched for the development of the necessary military capabilities can, in our view, provide a solid foundation to support the development of EU hard power. This is all the more so as the international system is clearly already in an inertia of great power competition, the dynamics of the international security environment is not expected to be less conflictual, and the EU's neighbouring regions continue to remain sources of trans-regional instability. In this line of thought, coronavirus pandemic will certainly have detrimental effects on defence budgets, but security challenges, together with the benefits of EU security and defence cooperation, can act as impetuses for development on the long run.

6. Concerning the financial effort needed to reduce the economic impact of the pandemic, we can see that the current context is perhaps one of the least favourable to the development of EU the security and defence dimension. However, *the high degree of competitiveness in the international environment, the uncertainty it generates and the maintenance of regional instability, which can be the source of new crises and threats, along with the frequent dissensions between European actors, on the one hand, and the USA, on the other, can provide incentives for the development of a hard dimension of EU power. The pressure to deal with external dangers, which they cannot face unilaterally, has the potential to determine European states to deepen their defence integration.*

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# THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS' UNCERTAINTY

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*The spread of SARS-CoV-2 highlighted some international conflicts, but it is too early to ascertain all of the spillover. These tendencies can be observed though in the tensions between the United States and China, or in the South and the East Asia regions. In this paper, under a perspective mixing realism and power transition theory, there are summed the main events that occurred during the first half of 2020, in the East Asia and the nuclear domain.*

The Sino-American political agenda is diverse, with multiple levels of interaction, comprising economic issues, domestic politics, human rights, regional and global strategies, but also more general issues such as norms and international rules, or great power relationship' management. This paper will address issues related to divergences regarding COVID-19 and the role of the World Health Organization (WHO); the Taiwan elections; the Hong Kong situation; the South China Sea events and the Kashmiri incidents. A separate section is dedicated to the strategic arms control negotiations between Moscow and Washington.

## **1. A More Ambitious China, on a Regional Scale**

The main characteristics of international regimes, states and organizations set the scene for the world's reaction to COVID-19<sup>1</sup>. Many scholars such as realist and power transition supporters, argue that, since there is no central authority and there

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<sup>1</sup> Amitav Acharya, "Irresponsible Superpowers must cooperate", *Yale Global Online*, 5 May 2020, URL: <https://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/irresponsible-superpowers-must-cooperate>, accessed on 13.07.2020.



are tensions between major actors, the global coordination of response tends to be suboptimal, because the states are stimulated to cheat while security issues often makes things worse, especially when the power distribution is changing<sup>2</sup>. To these one may add a domestic reason, easy to understand: the decision-makers tendency to pass the buck during crisis<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, the American and Chinese attitudes regarding WHO are becoming easier to understand. Washington blamed Beijing for supposedly hiding information about COVID-19, assuming that important data were hidden when they should have been communicated and accused the international organization for protecting the latter one (April-May 2020)<sup>4</sup>. With two sides publicly exchanging suspicions, the issue is not yet very clear, while the reasonable core of the debate may be found in the future, but, for now, the US withdrawal announced from the WHO is limiting the capacity for global coordination during the pandemic<sup>5</sup>.

Another issue which may have lasting effects, the law on national security in Hong Kong was proclaimed, in a decision seen by many pundits as an attempt to increase the central control of Chinese Communist Party (PCC), by reducing greatly its autonomy (30 June)<sup>6</sup>. The fate of this city provoked international echoes, being a significant economic center, not just for China, with one of the most valuable stock-markets in the world, and a meeting-place between East and West, with all the

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<sup>2</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, 1979 (the Romanian edition: Kenneth N. Waltz, *Teoria politicii internaționale*, Polirom, Iași 2006); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, W.W. Norton and Company, 2001 (the Romanian edition: John J. Mearsheimer, *Tragedia politicii de forță*, Antet, 2001); AFK Organski, Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger*, The University of Chicago Press, 1980; Frederick Klein, "Opinion – Realism and the Coronavirus Crisis", *E-International Relations*, 11 April 2020, URL: <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/04/11/opinion-realism-and-the-coronavirus-crisis/> accessed on 13.07.2020.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> Tamara Keith, Malaka Gharib, "A Timeline Of Coronavirus Comments From President Trump and WHO", *NPR*, 15 April 2020, URL: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/04/15/835011346/a-timeline-of-coronavirus-comments-from-president-trump-and-who>; Jason Hoffman, Maegan Vasquez, "Trump announces end of US relationship with World Health Organization", *CNN Politics*, 29 May 2020, URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/29/politics/donald-trump-world-health-organization/index.html>, accessed on 13.07.2020.

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<sup>6</sup> Elson Tong, "Explainer: 10 things to know about Hong Kong's national security law – new crimes, procedures and agencies", *Hong Kong Free Press*, 1 July 2020, URL: <https://hongkongfp.com/2020/07/01/explainer-10-things-to-know-about-hong-kongs-national-security-law-new-crimes-procedures-and-agencies/>; \*\*\*, "Hong Kong's new security law: Why it scares people", *BBC News*, 1 July 2020, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-53256034>, accessed on 13.07.2020.



associated dilemmas<sup>7</sup>. Several hundred protestors were arrested after this legislative change<sup>8</sup>.

Since Hong Kong' events put to test a *state, two systems* policy' credibility in Taiwan, the critics of CCP and the autonomy/independency supporters benefited from renewed popularity. The current president, Tsai Ing-Wen won a new mandate, a success which was by no means guaranteed before the 2019 protests, according to pundits<sup>9</sup>. Short time after, he questioned the viability of the so-called 1992 compromise, which allowed authorities from Taipei and Beijing to postpone solving the issue of sovereignty, while maintaining the appearances of unity<sup>10</sup>.

For the CCP, the forceful reunification was always an option, which enabled the conservation and strengthening of US-Taiwan security relationship, the Trump Administration expression often manifested its support<sup>11</sup>. The US Navy pursued reassurance missions, similar to those from the South China Sea<sup>12</sup>. The removal of „peaceful” from the formulaic reunification expression in an official Chinese document also raised eyebrows<sup>13</sup>. Beijing's ambitions were further pursued in a series of incidents with other states from the South China Sea, such as Vietnam<sup>14</sup>. Nevertheless, the US maritime missions and the international reactions seem to have preserved a certain prudence, by comparison to other areas. It is still an important region, connecting East Asia with the Middle East, with resourced and hosting

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> Scott Murdoch, Yanni Chow, “Hong Kong police arrest more than 300 protesting China's “birthday gift” of security law”, *Reuters*, 1 July 2020, URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hongkong-protests/hong-kong-police-arrest-more-than-300-protesting-chinas-birthday-gift-of-security-law-idUSKBN2423Y2>, accessed on 13 July 2020.

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<sup>10</sup> Derek Grossman, “Is the “1992 Consensus” Fading Away in the Taiwan Strait”, *The Diplomat*, 2 June 2020, URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/is-the-1992-consensus-fading-away-in-the-taiwan-strait/>, accessed on 13.07.2020.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence Chung, “US Navy Warship transits Taiwan Strait as PLA starts live-fire drills”, *South China Morning Post*, 14 May 2020, URL: <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3084401/us-navy-warship-transits-taiwan-strait-pla-starts-live-fire>, accessed on 13.07.2020.

<sup>13</sup> Yew Luan Tian, Yimou Lee, “China drops word “peaceful” in latest push for Taiwan “reunification””, *Reuters*, 22 May 2020, URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-parliament-taiwan/china-drops-word-peaceful-in-latest-push-for-taiwan-reunification-idUSKBN22Y06S>, accessed on 13.07.2020.

<sup>14</sup> Prashanth Parameswaran, “South China Sea and the Coronavirus: New China Vietnam Incident Spotlights Old Realities”, *The Diplomat*, 6 April 2020, URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/south-china-sea-and-the-coronavirus-new-vietnam-china-incident-spotlights-old-realities/>, accessed on 13.07.2020.



military forces which were on the rise, at least up to the pandemic's start<sup>15</sup>.

The Sino-American disputes were paralleled by the ones between Beijing and New Delhi; the incidents involving Indian and Chinese forces, near the demarcation zone in Kashmir reminded the world of another conflict in which local tensions combines with major actors' rivalries. The events are not very well ascertained, but it seems that the fights were pursued with hand-to hand weapons, and the number of casualties was low; the Chinese getting a local advantage (15 June)<sup>16</sup>. Thus, the regime lead by Xi Jinping once more left the impression of embracing tough solutions, which sometimes can be a problematic approach<sup>17</sup>.

## 2. Negotiations on Nuclear Arms Limitations

Representatives from the United States and Russian Federation started a series of nuclear arms control meetings, on renewing or replacing the main international document containing the bilateral rules and procedures, the New START of 2010, which expires next year<sup>18</sup>. As it was expected, China refused to take part in it, even after American officials' insistence<sup>19</sup>. The document contained restrictions on warheads, maximum 1,550 for each and deployed vectors at 700<sup>20</sup>.

Arms control and disarmament diplomacy became more difficult in recent years, following the denouncement by the US of the Iran nuclear deal; stagnation between Washington and Pyongyang; the worries regarding China nuclear modernization; the US announced withdrawal from the Open Skies treaty and, especially, the INF treaty crisis<sup>21</sup>. Many pundits expressed fears on the robustness of the whole nuclear

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<sup>15</sup> Associated Press: "Downwards trend: Southeast Asian countries cut defense spending", 26 May 2020, URL: <https://www.defensenews.com/global/asia-pacific/2020/05/26/downward-trend-south-east-asian-countries-cut-defense-spending/>, accessed on 13.07.2020.

<sup>16</sup> Helen Davidson, Ben Doherty, "Explainer: what is the deadly India-China border dispute about?", *The Guardian*, 17 June 2020, URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/17/explainer-what-is-the-deadly-india-china-border-dispute-about>, accessed on 13.07.2020.

<sup>17</sup> Hal Brands, "China's border invasion will push India toward the U.S.", *The Japan Times*, 2 June 2020, URL: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2020/06/02/commentary/world-commentary/chinas-border-invasion-will-push-india-toward-u-s/#.XwwEHigzaM8>, accessed on 13.07.2020.

<sup>18</sup> Kostis Geropoulos, Nicholas Waller, "Round one: US and Russia slowly hit-re-START nuke button", *New Europe*, 26 June 2020, URL: <https://www.neweurope.eu/article/round-one-us-and-russia-slowly-hit-re-start-nuke-button/>, accessed on 13.07.2020.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>20</sup> \*\*\*, "New Start: Treaty Text", *US Department of State*, URL: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/avc/newstart/c44126.htm>, accessed on 13.07.2020.

<sup>21</sup> Rajeswari Pillali Rajagopalan, "Implications of the US Withdrawal from the Open Skies Treaty", *The Diplomat*, 29 May 2020, URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/implications-of-the-us-withdrawal-from-the-open-skies-treaty/> accessed on 13.07.2020.



diplomacy regime<sup>22</sup>. US, Russia and China launched each its own nuclear upgrade programs, in the last decades, programs which have a difficult adjustment to arms control and disarmament approaches.

It is too early to ascertain the most important international political consequences endangered by the spread of SARS-CoV-2. Among other things, one can acknowledge a revival of tensions among major actors, especially US and China, following a combination of internal and external motivations. To these are added the characteristics of the global institutional system, which allow a lot of space of maneuver for the great powers and changes in the general relations of power.

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<sup>22</sup> \*\*\*, “Exercise of Power, Secretary Robert M. Gates”, *CSIS*, 18 June 2020, URL: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/exercise-power-secretary-robert-m-gates>, accessed on 13.07.2020.



# SECURITY EFFECTS AND GEOPOLITICAL TRENDS GENERATED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN THE MIDDLE EAST

*Mirela ATANASIU, PhD\**

In early 2020, the attention of states and international organizations focused on combating the global pandemic caused by SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)<sup>1</sup>. The crisis has broken out at a time when the Middle East is being characterized by conflict and political unrest. In fact, the pandemic has revealed and, in some cases, exacerbated a number of vulnerabilities in states in this region, especially their national health systems.

The identification of the COVID-19 pandemic effects and the geopolitical trends generated in the Middle East is based on the analysis of the evolution of a series of quantitative and qualitative indicators in the context of the visibly impact of this crisis on at least three major areas of security: health, economic and social. Thus, among the indicators to be analysed, in the context of the pandemic, are some specific ones derived from the manifestation of the crisis and others that appeared in the context of identifying the government's response capacity to the pandemic crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> A.N.: The virus, medically called SARS-CoV-2, but generically called COVID-19 in the mass-media, is part of the large family of coronaviruses that can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to severe acute respiratory syndrome SARS). Details at: \*\*\*, "Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)", *World Health Organization*, 11 March 2019, URL: [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/middle-east-respiratory-syndrome-coronavirus-\(mers-cov\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/middle-east-respiratory-syndrome-coronavirus-(mers-cov)), accessed on 20.05.2020.





Specific indicators of the health crisis are those related to the human mass affected by COVID-19 (number of infected/deceased/critically ill/cured people). Economic indicators are analysed to identify regional trends due to pandemic evolution, including inflation, oil prices, GDP, unemployment and the most affected industrial sectors, and to identify the state of social security we consider the following indicators: amplification/mitigation of internal tensions between political parties, protests, online anti-government activism, xenophobic tensions and domestic violence, the release of detainees, population's degree of compliance with restrictions, the evolution of intra/interstate relations etc.

The government's response capacity, in the context of pandemic crisis management activities, is measured by work indicators, such as: health facilities used to combat infection with this virus (number of hospitals/hospital beds/ICU beds/administered tests etc.); grid of measures taken to prevent and limit the spread of the virus (restriction of certain rights and freedoms such as free movement of persons, the right to education, the right to popular gatherings etc.), imposition of sanitary measures, allocation of emergency budgets for health infrastructures, some measures of economic and financial resilience to support and relaunch national economies. We would like to mention that the results of the present analysis must be considered subject to states' reports of incomplete or inaccurate data and in the context of an analysis framework with a limited number of indicators.

### **1. The Effects of the Triple Crisis Generated by COVID-19 in the Middle East**

COVID-19 is the second type of coronavirus to affect the Middle East, after the respiratory syndrome (MERS) reported in Saudi Arabia, in 2012<sup>2</sup>. In fact, MERS-CoV was still present at the end of January 2020, with the World Health Organization (WHO) presenting that “a total of 2,519 confirmed cases of MERS were reported globally, with most of these cases occurring in Saudi Arabia (2,121)”<sup>3</sup>. Subsequently, on 29 January 2020, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) reported the

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<sup>2</sup> A.N.: A number of states have reported cases of respiratory syndrome in the Middle East (MERS). Some were from or near the Arabian Peninsula: Bahrain, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Others have been recorded outside the Peninsula as a result of travel by people from the Middle East: Algeria, Austria, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malaysia, the Netherlands, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the USA. Details at: \*\*\*, “Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)”, *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, 2nd August 2019, URL: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/index.html>, accessed on 02.03.2020.

<sup>3</sup> \*\*\*, “MERS Situation Update January 2020”, Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, *World Health Organization*, 2020, URL: <https://applications.emro.who.int/docs/EMCSR254E.pdf?ua=1&ua=1>, accessed on 02.04.2020.



first positive case with SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) from the Middle East (a woman from Wuhan, China). Other Middle Eastern states have been hit by the pandemic, one by one<sup>4</sup>: Iran – 19 February; Israel, Lebanon – 21 February; Kuwait, Oman, Iraq, Bahrain – 24 February; Qatar – 27 February; Saudi Arabia, Jordan – 2 March; Turkey – 11 March (date when the WHO declared the public health crisis caused by SARS-CoV-2 a pandemic); Syria – 23 March; Yemen – 10 April.

### ***1.1. Health crisis***

A few months after the pandemic broke out, on 22 May 2020, the WHO showed that the Eastern Mediterranean was the third worst affected region in the world at that time, after America and Europe, with a total of 384,590 cases of infections<sup>5</sup>. Most cases of infection in the region were recorded in Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Kuwait and Israel (shown in Figure no. 1), but there were also reported cases in other states, including problematic state entities in terms of regional security and stability<sup>6</sup>: Iraq (3,877), Occupied Palestinian Territories (596), Yemen (184), Syria (58). In fact, in Syria and Yemen, COVID-19 arrived a little later, plus, although the figures were low, it is likely that they were under-reported. The advantage of these states, however, is that they are not so accessible, which limits community transmission. However, there is a possibility that the level of transmissibility will increase, and that weak health infrastructure, poor economic situation and the impossibility of purchasing medical resources will lead to a worsening of their humanitarian situation. However, by mid-2020, as the new coronavirus continues to spread in the Middle East, the region, which is usually in conflict, has become somewhat calmer, although the impact of the pandemic is strong.

In the following, for the most affected countries in the Middle East, identified in the figure above, we will establish some coordinates of the crisis, based on the established health, economic and security indicators.

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<sup>4</sup> A.N.: Data taken from the World Health Organisation website. See: \*\*\*, “WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard”, *WHO*, 19 February 2020, URL: [https://covid19.who.int/?gclid=Cj0KCCQjwudb3BRC9ARIsAEa-vUtZVD6Clxc\\_HpSR\\_rctKIKgkiZR4Pv5T8egvr5ATCf4wFfLy-HQj1QYwaAmc\\_EALw\\_wcB](https://covid19.who.int/?gclid=Cj0KCCQjwudb3BRC9ARIsAEa-vUtZVD6Clxc_HpSR_rctKIKgkiZR4Pv5T8egvr5ATCf4wFfLy-HQj1QYwaAmc_EALw_wcB), accessed on 26.05.2020.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem.*



**Figure no. 1:** The evolution of the COVID-19 crisis in some states in the Middle East since 20 May 2020<sup>7</sup>

**Table no. 1:** Quantitative data of critical human mass affected by COVID-19<sup>8</sup>

Quantitative indicators of health status on 22 May 2020 <sup>9</sup>	Middle Eastern states <sup>10</sup>						
	Iran	Turkey	Saudi Arabia	Qatar	UAE	Kuwait	Israel
No. of infected persons/ total population <sup>11</sup> = disease rate at the national level (%)	129,341/83,871,454 = 0.15	153,548/84,237,509 = 0.18	65,077/34,751,777 = 0.19	38,651/2,875,446 = 1.34	26,898/9,876,944 = 0.27	18,609/4,263,365 = 0.44	16,690/8,640,028 = 0.19
Number of infected person on the last day of the analysis	2,392	961	2,532	1,554	894	1,041	16
No. of critical cases	2,655	820	281	171	1	181	47
No. of deceased persons	7,249	4,249	351	17	237	129	279
No. of cured persons	100,564	114,990	36,040	7,288	12,755	5,205	13,915

The direct effect of the current pandemic is the accelerated disease of the population, due to its high transmissibility, with a much higher mortality rate among

<sup>7</sup> Map processed by the author with data taken from the *Al Jazeera* website. Details at: \*\*\*, “Middle East and North Africa. Countries with confirmed cases of COVID-19”, *Al Jazeera*, 22 May 2020, URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2020/03/covid-19-charts-maps-200310163714493.html>, accessed on 22.05.2020.

<sup>8</sup> A.N.: Statistical situation compiled by the author using the sources mentioned in the table.

<sup>9</sup> A.N.: Data taken from online sources: \*\*\*, “COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic”, *Worldometers*, 22 May 2020, URL: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/?from=groupmessage...#countries>, accessed on 22.05.2020.

<sup>10</sup> A.N.: The Middle Eastern states included in the table are with the most active cases in the region (active cases = total number of cases of infection - cured persons), from left to right.

<sup>11</sup> A.N.: The cases confirmed by COVID-19 are not the true expression of reality in each country because the number of confirmed cases depends largely on the degree of testing, so that countries that perform more tests appear in the top of the diseases, and states that do not have an active testing process appear to be less affected by the pandemic.



the elderly and people with co-morbidities<sup>12</sup>. On 22 May 2020, Turkey and Iran were among the top ten countries in the world, and the most affected in the Middle East, with the highest number of new coronavirus infections<sup>13</sup>. Also, regionally, these two states recorded the highest number of deaths because to this fact, but also critical cases that required pulmonary ventilation and had to be hospitalized in intensive care facilities; although Qatar had the highest population disease rate per 1000 inhabitants – 1.34, it recorded the lowest mortality (Figure no. 2). Among the analysed countries, according to the test results, on the mentioned date, considering the relationship consisting of the *total number of cases – number of new cases on the day of analysis – total number of deaths – number of new cases, number of people in critical condition*, Iran is facing the largest COVID-19 crisis in the Middle East, after being the victim of a polio virus in 2019<sup>14</sup>, and the year 2020 had started with massive floods and locust invasions. In fact, the pandemic situation in the Iranian state, at the end of June 2020, is even more dramatic, the number of infected doubled, about 40,000 active cases, and the number of deaths exceeded 10,000 people, suspecting the occurrence of “a second wave of crisis”<sup>15</sup>. However, at the regional level, in terms of population disease effect in the context of the pandemic, Iran may not actually be the most affected state, as the number or density of cases among the population may be underestimated for countries in military conflict (Yemen, Syria, Iraq), which do not have the resources or the possibility to carry out extensive testing activities to identify infected people, nor the adequate medical infrastructure to carry out a comprehensive management a serious health crisis, such as COVID-19.

Indirect negative effects on population’s health generated by this new type of coronavirus are the cessation of vaccination of approximately 80 million children against diphtheria, measles and polio, which exposes them to these risks, as well as

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<sup>12</sup> \*\*\*, “New coronavirus death rate estimates show how sharply the risk rises with age”, *LA Times*, 31 March 2020, URL: <https://www.latimes.com/science/story/2020-03-31/coronavirus-death-rate-estimates-show-risk-rising-sharply-with-age>, accessed on 22.05.2020.

<sup>13</sup> A.N.: Worldwide, considering the confirmed cases, on the first places were: USA - 1,501,876, the Russian Federation - 308,705, Brazil - 271,268, the Great Britain - 248,822, Spain - 232,037, Italy - 226,699, Germany - 176,007, Turkey - 151,615, France - 140,959, Iran 126,949. To be seen: \*\*\*, “WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard”, *World Health Organization*, 20 May 2020, URL: [https://covid19.who.int/?gclid=Cj0KCCQjwzZj2BRDVARIsABs319JDWOZ2EqPqQYTg8hE-hrY-A426UhzpCmOevBhhijEmg0rW7GZek67AaApKyEALw\\_wcB](https://covid19.who.int/?gclid=Cj0KCCQjwzZj2BRDVARIsABs319JDWOZ2EqPqQYTg8hE-hrY-A426UhzpCmOevBhhijEmg0rW7GZek67AaApKyEALw_wcB), accessed on 21.05.2020.

<sup>14</sup> A.N.: On 9 May 2019, The Global Polio Laboratory Network (GPLN) has notified the WHO of the detection of wild-type poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) in Konarak District, Sistan-Baluchistan Province, Islamic Republic of Iran. To be seen: \*\*\*, “Wild poliovirus type 1 – Islamic Republic of Iran. Disease outbreak news”, *World Health Organisation*, 24 May 2019, URL: <https://www.who.int/csr/don/24-may-2019-wild-polio-virus-islamic-republic-of-iran/en/>, accessed on 24.05.2020.

<sup>15</sup> Ali Zulfiqar, “Coronavirus: Has a second wave of infections hit Iran?”, *BBC News*, 25 June 2020, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/52959756>, accessed on 26.06.2020.



the lack or limitation of access by the population with chronic diseases to emergency medical care or optimal medication, as a result of health restrictions instituted in hospitals, restraints on the movement of persons or the depletion of stocks for certain drugs strictly necessary for individuals with other medical conditions.

### 1.2. Economic crisis

Along with the health effects, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are beginning to be felt in terms of economy, all over the world. Little is currently known about the medium to long term effects, although the International Monetary Fund has predicted that “the pandemic will trigger the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression”<sup>16</sup>. The same forum showed that almost every economy in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region will shrink this year, with declines ranging from 1.1% for Kuwait to 12% for Lebanon<sup>17</sup>. Also, Iran, already economically weakened by the political-economic sanctions maintained by the USA and, apparently, the most affected of the analysed states, remains on a downward economic slope. Therefore, we have focused this analysis on the immediate effects on short and medium-term determined or determinable macroeconomic indicators and sectors of the affected economy in the Middle East countries, as shown in the following tables.

**Table no. 2:** Economic data resulted from COVID-19

<b>The evolution of some macro-economic indicators</b>			
<b>National currencies against the US dollar<sup>18</sup></b>	<b>Middle Eastern currencies</b>	<b>31 December 2019</b>	<b>26 May 2020</b>
	Turkish Lira	1 TRY = 0.1681 USD	<b>1 TRY = 0.1487 USD</b>
	<b>Iranian Rial</b>	<b>1 IRR = 0.000024 USD</b>	1 IRR = 0.000024 USD
	Saudi Rial	1 SAR = 0.2669 USD	<b>1 SAR = 0.2161 USD</b>
	Qatari Rial	1 QAR = 0.2747 USD	<b>1 QAR = 0.2224 USD</b>
	<b>Dirham (UAE)</b>	<b>1 AED = 0.2723 USD</b>	1 AED = 0.2723 USD
	Kuwaiti Dinar	1 KWD = 3.3036 USD	<b>1 KWD = 3.2415 USD</b>
	Shekel	1 ILS = 0.2896 USD	<b>1 ILS = 0.2853 USD</b>
<b>Oil prices (\$/barrel)<sup>19</sup></b>	<b>Oil transactions</b>	<b>30 December 2019</b>	<b>26 May 2020</b>
	OPEC <sup>20</sup>	68.89	29.75
	BRENT	68.44	35.53
	WTI	61.68	34.35

<sup>16</sup> Kristalina Georgieva, “Exceptional Times, Exceptional Action: Opening Remarks for Spring Meetings Press Conference”, *International Monetary Fund*, 15 April 2020, URL: [https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/04/15/sp\\_041520-exceptional-times-exceptional-action](https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/04/15/sp_041520-exceptional-times-exceptional-action), accessed on 23.05.2020.

<sup>17</sup> \*\*\*, “World Economic Outlook, April 2020: The Great Lockdown”, *International Monetary Fund*, April 2020, URL: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2020/04/14/weo-april-2020>, accessed on 22.05.2020.

<sup>18</sup> A.N.: The exchange rates of the Middle Eastern states were taken from the website: <https://www.poundsterlinglive.com/>, accessed on 23.05.2020.





Inflation is an important indicator of the evolution of a state's economic situation. For example, the Turkish economy, although it had problems even before the outbreak of the coronavirus, with the pandemic, it is falling, as evidenced by the collapse of the Turkish lira against the dollar. Moreover, the evolution of the exchange rates of the national currencies of most Middle Eastern states in May 2020 showed that the regional economy was declining. Subsequently, in June 2020, following the resumption of economic activities, the national currencies of most states in this region recovered, some even at better rates than before the outbreak of the pandemic (1 ILS = 0.2907 USD; SAR = 0.2666 USD; 1 KWD = USD 3.2478), defying the current context in which monetary instability is a global trend.

Another economic effect of the pandemic is the drop in oil prices that resulted directly from the cessation of activity in most industrial sectors, which causes turbulence in the entire regional economy. Of the countries analysed, 5 are oil producers, Iran and 4 other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council/GCC (UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) – a regionally important political and economic organization. In fact, the main source of profit for most Middle Eastern countries is oil production and exports, with the exception of Turkey and Israel, among the countries analysed in this study. In recent years, oil states are struggling to diversify their economic portfolios (for example, Saudi Arabia's *Vision 2030*), but the crisis has also had a major impact on this intention. Moreover, restrictive measures, such as the total or partial interruption of economic activity and the activation of the "Stay home today, be able to travel tomorrow" policy, promoted by the World Tourism Organization, have made some industrial sectors (oil industry, trade, tourism, transport and services) to suffer significant negative effects (Table no. 3).

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<sup>19</sup> \*\*\*, "Weekly Brent, OPEC basket, and WTI crude oil prices from December 30, 2019 to May 26, 2020 (in U.S. dollars per barrel)", *Statista*, URL: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/326017/weekly-crude-oil-prices/>, accessed on 27.05.2020.

<sup>20</sup> A.N.: The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) controls most of the oil production and distribution (in 2018, it held 79.4% of the global reserve), often determining prices for oil suppliers, but also for countries. In fact, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE are its members. See more at: \*\*\*, "OPEC share of world crude oil reserves, 2018", OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin 2019, *Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries*, 2019. URL: [https://www.opec.org/opec\\_web/en/data\\_graphs/330.htm](https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/data_graphs/330.htm), accessed on 27.05.2020.





Table no. 3: Economic sectors most affected by COVID-19

Sectors	Indicators and effects on damaged industrial sectors
Oil industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the price of crude oil has fallen to an all-time low as the COVID-19 pandemic has increased global market uncertainties and reduced demand for fuels, and land deposits have reached the limit;</li><li>- there was a sudden decrease in domestic and external demand for goods, but also for products obtained from oil as a result of the reduction of economic activities;</li><li>- oil production has stopped due to capping global consumption, but also the lack of manpower willing to risk their health security.</li></ul>
Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the tendency of saving money/restricting consumption by family beneficiaries due to financial restrictions caused by unemployment generated by the closure of economic activities was accentuated;</li><li>- there was a sharp decline in domestic and external demand for consumer goods and products (excluding food and pharmaceuticals products);</li><li>- small entrepreneurs have heavily suffered being the last entity supported by states, with large companies having priority to support;</li><li>- companies seek to diversify their suppliers by favouring local ones, even at higher costs, so that supply chains have become local rather than global.</li></ul>
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the impact of measures taken to combat COVID-19, such as restricting movement, closing accommodation facilities, cultural and natural attractions, cancelling or postponing public events and gatherings, has helped to block national and international tourism (for example, the pandemic caused a 22% decrease in international tourist arrivals in the first three months of 2020, when the pandemic had not yet spread around the world<sup>21</sup>), which already shows that there will be huge economic repercussions, including the loss of income from tourism and leisure activities and by generalizing will also increase unemployment in this sector;</li><li>- with the gradual reopening of tourist establishments, restrictive health and hygiene measures have been established and implemented in them to minimize the risk of spreading the virus (measures to maintain social distance, stop or limit the activity of public catering locations, wearing masks indoors, disinfection actions etc.).</li></ul>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the pandemic has a strong negative effect on public passenger transport, with most states stopping this form of transport altogether, some maintaining it in a restrictive form (for example, Turkey has banned access to public transport for people over 65 for a few months<sup>22</sup>);</li><li>- airports in the Middle East are part of the major connecting platform for east-west air transport flows, so that the blocking of passenger access/exit in/from different states<sup>23</sup> has paralyzed international transport so that they have temporarily suspended their operations, with except for freight and emergency flights or have reduced their flight frequency;</li><li>- the borders, although closed, allowed the transport of medical equipment and products;</li><li>- with regard to maritime transport, ports and terminals are operational with delays due to the reduced working hours of carriers and customs staff, preventive measures and their reduced capacity in the context of ensuring social distance. Therefore, the volume of goods transited through ports is low;</li><li>- the centre of gravity of the transporters' activity has shifted from transporting people between different geographical landmarks to maintaining a basic operational system to combat COVID-19 and implementing specific measures, in the context of the limited resumption of transport activities.</li></ul>
Other services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the Hotels, Restaurants and Cafes segment (HORECA), which comprises 30% of the GCC economy, was particularly affected, as approximately 20% of its revenues are related to tourism<sup>24</sup>;</li><li>- travel restrictions have slowed down the food and alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages sectors;</li><li>- medical services are overburdened in most Middle Eastern countries;</li><li>- The pandemic has catalysed an unprecedented increase in digital services and technologies.</li></ul>

<sup>21</sup> *Idem*, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Alex Ciutacu, "Turcia le interzice cetătenilor mai bătrâni de 65 de ani să iasă din casă", *Ziarul Financiar*, 21 March 2020, URL: <https://www.zf.ro/business-international/turcia-le-interzice-cetate-nilor-mai-batrani-de-65-de-ani-sa-iasa-din-casa-19007653>, accessed on 02.06.2020.

<sup>23</sup> A.N.: The first measure, in February 2020, was to block flights to and from China (except for those to/from Beijing and Hong Kong). Subsequently, additional measures were implemented such as thermal screening of arriving passengers and the mandatory use of the passport for GCC nation-



The main effect on these sectors is widespread unemployment. For example, in Iran, where the labour market was already suffering from a job shortage, after the onset of the crisis, the unemployment rate rose from 20% to 35% in a few months<sup>25</sup>. The same problem is visible in the other oil states with extra-national seasonal employees who have been fired and many returned to their countries of origin. Consequently, in addition to affecting the local population unable to pay their financial obligations, the pandemic also brings a blow to the financial flow from the rich to the poorest countries from the work of immigrants, who supplemented the income of their families in the country of origin.

Many countries around the world have restricted domestic and international traffic only to road freight services, with the closure of passenger transport causing a deficit in the economic branches of transport and international tourism, which is an important source of income for many countries. Tourism plays an important role in the economies of many countries in the Middle East (Iran, Oman, Israel and Turkey), each known for its cultural heritage, souvenir markets and/or sandy beaches. Thus, in the Middle East, tourism accounts for 8.7% of the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and supports 5.4 million jobs, and pandemic losses estimated at nearly \$ 7 billion per month<sup>26</sup>. We can add that the global economic shock generated by the new type of coronavirus mainly affects the economies of the Middle East, for at least two reasons: "*close connection with China in terms of trade and services*"<sup>27</sup>, which affected in the first instance by reducing revenues in this sector, *and the COVID-19 pandemic suffered directly by these states*, which affected key sectors of their economies, including the oil industry and tourism. Thus, measures to restrict the movement of goods and people have disrupted production, supply chains and trade, which in turn have

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also to travel in the region. In March 2020, European routes and those between the countries of the Middle East were suspended. See: Xavier Esparrich, "Outlook of the impact of COVID-19 on the Middle East air transport sector", ALG, URL: <https://algnewsletter.com/aviation/outlook-of-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-middle-east-air-transport-sector/>, accessed on 09.06.2020.

<sup>24</sup> Sarwant Singh, "COVID-19: Implications and Opportunities for Growth in the GCC Region", Frost & Sullivan, 16 April 2020, URL: <https://ww2.frost.com/frost-perspectives/the-business-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-gcc-region-implications-and-opportunities-for-growth/>, accessed on 09.06.2020.

<sup>25</sup> Amin Mohseni-Cheraghloou, "Iran and the economic fallout of COVID-19", *Middle East Institute*, 14 April 2020, URL: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/iran-and-economic-fallout-covid-19>, accessed on 28.05.2020.

<sup>26</sup> James Danselow, "Middle East Tourism in the age of the Coronavirus", *The Levant News*, 26 May 2020, URL: <https://thelevantnews.com/en/2020/05/middle-east-tourism-in-the-age-of-the-coronavirus/>, accessed on 06.06.2020.

<sup>27</sup> Dale Gavlak, "Why COVID-19 is a Double Whammy for Middle East Countries", *Voa News*, 15 April 2020, URL: <https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/why-covid-19-double-whammy-middle-east-countries>, accessed on 10.06.2020.



led to lower oil prices, inflation and rising unemployment in the countries most affected by the health crisis.

### ***1.3. The social security crisis***

In the context of the health crisis, amidst a state of emergency in various states, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said that “the COVID-19 pandemic has quickly turned into a human rights crisis”<sup>28</sup> by establishing and implementing governmental restrictive measures of social distancing, in fact physical distancing between persons<sup>29</sup>, which has led to the limitation or annulment of some commonly exercised human rights. For example, the governments of some Middle Eastern states, such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, have restricted access to information and freedom of expression by issuing decrees banning the printing and distribution of newspapers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Another way to restrict the same right was to ban social media applications such as Skype, WhatsApp or FaceTime Apple (United Arab Emirates, Qatar) and “Voice over IP” (VoIP) platforms, which allowed communication with people located in other countries, including their family members<sup>30</sup>. Social distancing rules also outlaw any anti-government public gatherings or restrict the freedom of movement of certain age groups considered vulnerable (for example, in Turkey, people under 20 and over 65 have been allowed for weeks to go outside the house only once a week for a few hours).

Furthermore, the analysis will focus on some social security indicators identified as viable in the context of the restrictions generated by the anti-COVID-19 movements in the Middle East states (Table no. 4).

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<sup>28</sup> António Guterres, “We are all in this Together: Human Rights and COVID-19 Response and Recovery”, *United Nations*, 23 April 2020, URL: <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/we-are-all-together-human-rights-and-covid-19-response-and>, accessed on 17.06.2020.

<sup>29</sup> Darrin Hodgetts, Otilie Stolte, “Social Distance”, *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology*, Springer, New York, 2014, p. 21.

<sup>30</sup> \*\*\*, “COVID-19: Unblock Voice Over IP Platforms in Gulf”, *Human Rights Watch*, 7 April 2020, URL: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/07/covid-19-unblock-voice-over-ip-platforms-gulf>, accessed on 13.06.2020.



**Table no. 4:** Highlights of the social security crisis

Indicators of social security/insecurity status	Reference states						
	Iran	Turkey	Saudi Arabia	Qatar	UAE	Kuwait	Israel
1. Domestic political tensions	X <sup>31</sup>	X <sup>32</sup>	-	-	-	-	X <sup>33</sup>
2. Protests	X <sup>34</sup>	X <sup>35</sup>	-	X <sup>36</sup>	X <sup>37</sup>	X <sup>38</sup>	X <sup>39</sup>
3. Online activism against governments	X <sup>40</sup>	X <sup>41</sup>	X <sup>42</sup>	X <sup>43</sup>	X <sup>44</sup>	X <sup>45</sup>	X <sup>46</sup>
4. Infringement of restrictive measures	X <sup>47</sup>	X <sup>48</sup>	X <sup>49</sup>	X <sup>50</sup>	X <sup>51</sup>	X <sup>52,53</sup>	X <sup>54</sup>
5. Release of detainees from prisons	X <sup>55</sup>	X <sup>56</sup>	X <sup>57</sup>	-	X <sup>58</sup>	-	X <sup>59</sup>
6. Deterioration of regional intra/interstate relations	X <sup>60,61</sup>	X <sup>62</sup>	-	X <sup>63</sup>	-	-	X <sup>64</sup>
7. Improvement of intra-interstate relations	X <sup>65</sup>	X <sup>66</sup>	X <sup>67</sup>	X <sup>68</sup>	X <sup>69</sup>	-	X <sup>70,71</sup>
8. Concluding ceasefire agreements <sup>72</sup>	-	X <sup>73</sup>	X <sup>74</sup>	-	-	-	X <sup>75</sup>
9. Xenophobe actions, speeches and tensions	X <sup>76</sup>	X <sup>77</sup>	X <sup>78</sup>	X <sup>79</sup>	X <sup>80</sup>	X <sup>81,82</sup>	X <sup>83</sup>
10. Increased domestic violence	X <sup>84</sup>	X <sup>85</sup>	X <sup>86</sup>	-	-	-	X <sup>87</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Ryan Grace, “COVID-19 prompts the spread of disinformation across MENA”, *Middle East Institute*, 20 March 2020, URL: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/covid-19-prompts-spread-disinformation-across-mena>, accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>32</sup> Marc Pierini, “The Ripple Effects of the Coronavirus in Turkey”, *Carnegie Europe*, 16 April 2020, URL: <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/81574>, accessed on 13.06.2020.

<sup>33</sup> \*\*\*, “Israel: Netanyahu using COVID-19 updates to strengthen his political standing”, *Middle East Monitor*, 21 April 2020, URL: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200421-israel-netanyahu-using-covid-19-updates-to-strengthen-his-political-standing/>, accessed on 11.06.2020.

<sup>34</sup> \*\*\*, “Iranian semi-official news agency reports anti-government protests”, *Al Arabya English*, 11 January 2020, URL: <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2020/01/11/Iranian-semi-official-news-agency-reports-anti-government-protests>, accessed on 11.06.2020.

<sup>35</sup> \*\*\*, “Turkish police detain union leaders attempting to stage May Day rally”, *France 24*, 1 May 2020, URL: <https://www.france24.com/en/20200501-turkish-police-detain-union-leaders-attempting-to-stage-may-day-rally>, accessed on 11.06.2020.

<sup>36</sup> \*\*\*, “Migrant workers protest in Qatar over unpaid wages”, *Arab News*, 24 May 2020, URL: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1678936/middle-east>, accessed on 12.06.2020.

<sup>37</sup> Chandan Kumar Mandal, “Without work and salary, Nepali migrants protest in Covid-hit UAE”, *Kathmandu Post*, 18 May 2020, URL: <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/05/18/without-work-and-salary-nepali-migrants-protest-in-covid-hit-uae>, accessed on 11.06.2020.

<sup>38</sup> Martin Chulov, “India to send navy and fleet of planes to repatriate workers stranded by coronavirus”, *The Guardian*, 4 May 2020, URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/04/kuwait-police-break-up-riot-by-egyptian-workers-stranded-by-coronavirus>, accessed on 11.06.2020.

<sup>39</sup> Gilad Zwick, “Are the anti-government economic protests organized by the Left?”, *Israel Hayom*, 5 June 2020, URL: <https://www.israelhayom.com/2020/05/06/are-the-anti-government-economic-protests-organized-by-the-left/>, accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Lipin, Ramin Haghjoo, Kambiz Tavana, Behrooz Samadbeygi, “Iran-Based Dissident: Government Mishandling of Pandemic Worsened Economic Crisis”, *VOA News*, 16 April 2020, URL: <https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/iran-based-dissident-government-mishandling-pandemic-worsened-economic-crisis>, accessed on 16.06.2020.





<sup>41</sup> Marc Pierini, *art. cit.*

<sup>42</sup> Khalid Ibrahim, "Impact of COVID-19 containment measures on human rights and civil liberties in the Middle East", *Global Voices*, 8 April 2020, URL: <https://globalvoices.org/2020/04/08/impact-of-covid-19-containment-measures-on-human-rights-and-civil-liberties-in-the-middle-east/>, accessed on 16.06.2020.

<sup>43</sup> Burhan Wazir, "Disinformation about Qatar surges in wake of COVID-19", *Coda*, 23 March 2020, URL: <https://www.codastory.com/disinformation/coronavirus-disinformation-qatar/>, accessed on 16.06.2020.

<sup>44</sup> Brian Murphy, "Rights group: UAE deports online activist", *Associated Press*, URL: <https://news.yahoo.com/news/rights-group-uae-deports-online-activist-141617978.html>, accessed on 11.06.2020.

<sup>45</sup> \*\*\*, "Kuwait takes legal action against 23 social media accounts over Covid-19 misinformation", *Kuwait Today*, 19 March 2020, URL: <https://www.kuwaitonline.media/kuwait-takes-legal-action-against-23-social-media-accounts-over-covid-19-misinformation/>, accessed on 11.06.2020.

<sup>46</sup> Tzvi Joffe, "Cyberattack: Anti-Israel message takes over multiple Israeli websites", *The Jerusalem Post*, 21 May 2020, URL: <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/cyberattack-replaces-multiple-israeli-websites-with-anti-israel-message-628787>, accessed on 11.06.2020.

<sup>47</sup> \*\*\*, "5,000 drivers fined in Iran for breach of social distancing rules amid coronavirus outbreak", *Tehran Times*, 30 March 2020, URL: <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/446383/5-000-drivers-fined-in-iran-for-breach-of-social-distancing-rules>, accessed on 12.06.2020.

<sup>48</sup> \*\*\*, "Turkish police detain union leaders attempting to stage May Day rally", *France 24*, 1 May 2020, URL: <https://www.france24.com/en/20200501-turkish-police-detain-union-leaders-attempting-to-stage-may-day-rally>, accessed on 11.06.2020.

<sup>49</sup> Deema al-Khudair, "Gatherings blamed for hike in COVID-19 cases in Saudi Arabia", *Arab News*, URL: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1673311/saudi-arabia>, accessed on 13.06.2020.

<sup>50</sup> \*\*\*, "Qatar: Construction firms fined for flouting health & safety measures to prevent Covid-19 spread", *Business and Human Rights Research Center*, 20 April 2020, URL: <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/qatar-construction-firms-fined-for-flouting-health-safety-measures-to-prevent-covid-19-spread>, accessed on 12.06.2020.

<sup>51</sup> Hesham Salah, "Combating coronavirus: Hundreds fined, warned as Dubai cycle patrols enforce Covid-19 rules", *Khaleej Times*, 16 June 2020, URL: <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/coronavirus-pandemic/combating-coronavirus-hundreds-fined-warned-as-dubai-cycle-patrols-enforce-covid-19-rules-->, accessed on 19.06.2020.

<sup>52</sup> \*\*\*, "Kuwait: Authorities announce plans to deport foreign workers who violate COVID-19 regulations May 19 /update 17", *Garda World News Alert*, 21 May 2020, URL: <https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/344386/kuwait-authorities-announce-plans-to-deport-foreign-workers-who-violate-covid-19-regulations-may-19-update-17>, accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>53</sup> A.N.: 352 violations of health measures were reported in Kuwait malls. See: \*\*\*, "Scores of shops closed in Kuwait for violating coronavirus precautionary measures", *Arab News*, 19 May 2020, URL: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1676811/middle-east>, accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>54</sup> \*\*\*, "300 Israelis arrested for defying coronavirus ban on Jewish holiday", *Al Monitor*, 13 May 2020, URL: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/05/israel-lag-bomer-holiday-arrests-coronavirus-orthodox.html>, accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>55</sup> \*\*\*, "Coronavirus: Iran temporarily frees 54,000 prisoners to combat spread", *BBC News*, 3 March 2020, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-51723398>, accessed on 17.06.2020.



<sup>56</sup> Kareem Fahim, “Turkish dissidents remain jailed as thousands of inmates are released to avoid prison epidemic”, *The Washington Post*, 22 April 2020, URL: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/turkish-dissidents-remain-jailed-as-thousands-of-inmates-are-released-to-avoid-prison-epidemic/2020/04/22/8570e65a-83ea-11ea-81a3-9690c9881111\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/turkish-dissidents-remain-jailed-as-thousands-of-inmates-are-released-to-avoid-prison-epidemic/2020/04/22/8570e65a-83ea-11ea-81a3-9690c9881111_story.html), accessed on 17.06.2020.

<sup>57</sup> \*\*\*, “GCC and the COVID-19 Crisis”, Advocating for Human Rights in the Gulf Region, 2020, URL: <https://www.ecdhr.org/?p=881>, accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>58</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>59</sup> Idan Zonshine, “Israel to release hundreds of prisoners to curb coronavirus spread”, *Jerusalem Post*, 28 March 2020, URL: <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/israel-to-release-hundreds-of-prisoners-to-curb-spread-of-coronavirus-622611>, accessed on 19.06.2020.

<sup>60</sup> A.N.: Iran has continued its anti-American rhetoric blaming the US for its own disastrous situation. See: \*\*\*, “The Impact of Covid-19 on the Middle East and North Africa”, *Institute for Contemporary Affairs*, Vol. 20, No. 6, 16 April 2020, URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/impact-covid-19-middle-east-and-north-africa>, accessed on 16.06.2020.

<sup>61</sup> Majid Rafizadeh, “Why Iran’s anti-Israel rhetoric is mere bluster”, *Arab News*, 28 May 2020, URL: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1681266>, accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>62</sup> A.N.: Protests against Turkey’s military involvement in Libya were held in the streets of Benghazi. See: \*\*\*, “Protest against Turkish interference in Libya,” *Africa News*, 14 June 2020, URL: <https://www.africanews.com/2020/06/14/protest-against-turkish-interference-in-libya/>, accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>63</sup> A.N.: UAE condemns Turkish intervention in Libya. See: \*\*\*, “Turkey accuses UAE of sowing chaos in the Middle East”, *Al Jazeera*, 12 May 2020, URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/05/turkey-accuses-uae-sowing-chaos-middle-east-200512174612295.html>, accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>64</sup> \*\*\*, “Protection of civilians’ occupied Palestinian Territory”, *OCHA*, 2-15 June 2020, p. 1, URL: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/protection\\_of\\_civilians\\_2\\_15\\_june\\_2020.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/protection_of_civilians_2_15_june_2020.pdf), accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>65</sup> A.N.: Limitation of hostile rhetoric between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Details at: Marissa Moran, Justin Chapman, “COVID-19 Lowers Hostile Rhetoric between Saudi Arabia & Iran”, *Pacific Council on International Policy*, 25 March 2020. URL: <https://www.pacificcouncil.org/newsroom/covid-19-lowers-hostile-rhetoric-between-saudi-arabia-iran>, accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>66</sup> A.N.: Turkey has become a leading donor providing humanitarian aid and medical supplies to more than 30 countries in the Americas, Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East. See: Hafssa Fakher el Abiari, “Turkey Seizes COVID-19 as Opportunity to Improve Foreign Policy”, *Morocco World News*, 17 May 2020, URL: <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2020/05/302751/turkey-seizes-covid-19-as-opportunity-to-improve-foreign-policy/>, accessed on 18.06.2020.

<sup>67</sup> Marissa Moran, Justin Chapman, *art. cit.*

<sup>68</sup> A.N.: Qatar participated in the first virtual summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council since the blockade against it by members of this organization. See: Elham Fakhro, “COVID and Gulf Foreign Policy”, *International Crisis Group*, 20 April 2020, URL: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/covid-and-gulf-foreign-policy>, accessed on 19.06.2020.

<sup>69</sup> A.N.: By supporting Iran and Syria in the context of the pandemic, the UAE has eased interstate tensions with these states. See: Elham Fakhro, “COVID and Gulf Foreign Policy”, *International Crisis Group*, 20 April 2020, URL: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/covid-and-gulf-foreign-policy>, accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>70</sup> Majid Rafizadeh, “Why Iran’s anti-Israel rhetoric is mere bluster”, *Arab News*, 28 May 2020, URL: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1681266>, accessed on 15.06.2020.





<sup>71</sup> A.N.: Improvement of Arab-Israeli relations in Israel. See: Afif Abub Much, “In Israel, coronavirus crisis improves Jewish-Arab relations”, *Al Monitor*, 10 May 2020, URL: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/05/israel-arabs-benjamin-netanyahu-yitzhak-rabin-joint-list.html>, accessed on 19.06.2020.

<sup>72</sup> A.N.: Although COVID-19 encouraged the conclusion of agreements in theatres of operations between existing opponents in Syria, Libya, Yemen, it did not encourage armistices between the authorities and internal Islamists in the majority Muslim states. Details at: Alex Thurston, “Islamic Responses to COVID-19”, in *The COVID-19 Pandemic in the Middle East and North Africa*, *Middle East Political Science*, April 2020, p. 16.

<sup>73</sup> \*\*\*, “Russia, Turkey implement cease-fire in northwestern Syria”, *Al Arabiya*, 6 March 2020, URL: <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2020/03/06/Russia-Turkey-implement-cess-fire-in-northwestern-Syria->, accessed on 19.06.2020.

<sup>74</sup> A.N.: Saudi Arabia declared a unilateral ceasefire in Yemen in April 2020. See: Jonathan Fenton-Harvey, “Saudi Arabia’s Belt-Tightening amid COVID-19 Risks Domestic Discontent”, *World Politics Review*, 22 May 2020, URL: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/28784/saudi-arabia-s-belt-tightening-amid-covid-19-risks-domestic-discontent>, accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>75</sup> \*\*\*, “Palestinian-Israeli Cooperation to Combat COVID-19 Pandemic under Threat by New Push for West Bank Annexation, Special Coordinator Warns Security Council”, *United Nations Security Council*, 23 April 2020.

<sup>76</sup> A.N.: The Iranian government blames the Zionists for spreading Covid-19 to the Middle East. See: Seth J. Frantzman, “Iran’s regime pushes antisemitic conspiracies about coronavirus”, *Jerusalem Post*, 8 March 2020, URL: <https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Iran-News/Irans-regime-pushes-antisemitic-conspiracies-about-coronavirus-620212>, accessed on 19.06.2020.

<sup>77</sup> Kemal Kirişçi, M. Murat Erdoğan, “Turkey and COVID-19: Don’t forget refugees”, *Brookings*, 20 April 2020, URL: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/04/20/turkey-and-covid-19-dont-forget-refugees/>, accessed on 19.06.2020.

<sup>78</sup> Ramadan Al Sherbini, “Coronavirus: Saudi Aramco says it’s dismayed with ‘human sanitiser’”, *Gulf News*, 11 March 2020, URL: <https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/saudi/coronavirus-saudi-aramco-says-its-dismayed-with-human-sanitiser-1.70307723>, accessed on 19.06.2020.

<sup>79</sup> Lorenzo Guadagno, “Migrants and the COVID-19 pandemic: An initial analysis”, *International Organization for Migration*, 2020, p. 21.

<sup>80</sup> \*\*\*, “UAE arrests Emirati influencer for “racist speech”, as coronavirus epidemic sparks foreign workers’ debate”, *The New Arab*, 16 April 2020, URL: <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2020/4/16/uae-arrests-emirati-influencer-for-racist-speech>, accessed on 19.06.2020.

<sup>81</sup> \*\*\*, “How Covid-19 Stress-Tested Relations between Residents & Citizens in Kuwait”, *Gulf International Forum*, 29 April 2020, URL: <https://gulffif.org/how-covid-19-stress-tested-relations-between-residents-citizens-in-kuwait/>, accessed on 08.05.2020.

<sup>82</sup> A.N.: Kuwait has condemned Iran’s irresponsibility for the spread of the virus in the Middle East. See: Yousef H. Alshammari, “Coronavirus in Arab Gulf States: Symptoms Include Range of Xenophobia”, *Inside Arabia*, 2 April 2020, URL: <https://insidearabia.com/coronavirus-in-arab-gulf-states-symptoms-include-range-of-xenophobia/>, accessed on 09.05.2020.

<sup>83</sup> A.N.: Israelis or Zionists are accused in the media and by various anti-Semitic organizations of creating and disseminating the coronavirus for economic gain. To be seen: Coronavirus: \*\*\*, “Extremist Anti-Israel Rhetoric”, *Fighting Hate for Good (ADL)*, 19 May 2020, <https://www.adl.org/blog/coronavirus-extremist-anti-israel-rhetoric>, accessed on 08.06.2020.



The indicators analysed for the first half of 2020 show that the policy of most authoritarian regimes in the Gulf has been accepted by citizens, often for fear of sanctions<sup>88</sup>, and even a sharp decrease in political tensions within these countries was seen. For example, in Saudi Arabia, the management of the health crisis by Prince Mohammad Bin Salman has given him more legitimacy and a better image. There were exceptions in Israel, where the pandemic became a political leitmotif between the opposition and the ruling party, but also in Iran, where the political struggle and social unrest present before the pandemic continued.

A major positive trend is the activation of humanitarian diplomacy in the region. In the existing pandemic situation, states known as rivals are helping each other to overcome the moment. These are signals from governments trying to ease political tensions in the context of COVID-19, for example, the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait have provided humanitarian assistance to Iran<sup>89</sup>. This shows that the Gulf States are more likely to establish bilateral relations with Iran than to collectively commit to cooperating with each other, although here in the middle of the year, after a few months of crisis, there were some exceptions (for example, the signed agreement between Sudan, Qatar and Turkey to strengthen COVID-19 combat capabilities<sup>90</sup>).

However, international relations as a whole are affected by diplomatic tensions

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<sup>84</sup> Patrick Wintour, "Iran's president has left nation open to second Covid-19 wave – critics", *The Guardian*, 13 April 2020, URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/13/irans-president-has-left-nation-open-to-second-covid-19-wave-critics>, accessed on 09.05.2020.

<sup>85</sup> Pelin Ünker, Daniel Bellut, "Domestic violence rises in Turkey during COVID-19 pandemic", *Deutsche Welle*, 10 April 2020, URL: <https://www.dw.com/en/domestic-violence-rises-in-turkey-during-covid-19-pandemic/a-53082333>, accessed on 10.05.2020.

<sup>86</sup> Bassel Barakat, "Divorce rates increase in Saudi Arabia amid COVID-19", *Anadolu Agency*, 5 June 2020, URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/divorce-rates-increase-in-saudi-arabia-amid-covid-19/1866563>, accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>87</sup> \*\*\*, "Knesset committee meets to discuss increase in domestic violence during coronavirus lockdown", *i24 News*, 23 June 2020, URL: <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/society/1592827050-knesset-committee-meets-to-discuss-increase-in-domestic-violence-during-coronavirus-lockdown>, accessed on 23.06.2020.

<sup>88</sup> States such as Iran, Qatar, the UAE, and Kuwait have established costly penalties for individuals and organizations that violate restrictive measures taken to combat coronavirus. For example: \*\*\*, "Iran faces 'second wave' of virus as death toll surges past 7,000", *Arab News*, 18 May 2020, URL: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1676281/middle-east>; Mariam M. Al Serkal, "COVID-19: Dh1,000 fine for not sticking to your healthcare appointment in UAE", *Gulf News*, 16 June 2020, URL: <https://gulfnews.com/uae/covid-19-dh1000-fine-for-not-sticking-to-your-healthcare-appointment-in-uae-1.1592287223659>, accessed on 19.06.2020.

<sup>89</sup> Laura Rozen, "Coronavirus spurs regional humanitarian outreach to Iran", *Al-Monitor*, 18 March 2020, URL: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/03/coronavirus-spur-humanitarian-outreach-iran.html>, accessed on 08.05.2020.

<sup>90</sup> \*\*\*, "Sudan, Qatar and Turkey sign Agreement to combat COVID-19", *Sudan News Agency*, 16 June 2020, URL: <https://suna-sd.net/en/single?id=672400>, accessed on 19.06.2020.



resulting from the sale and transport of medicines, diagnostic tests and hospital equipment needed to fight the new type of coronavirus. Competition to obtain such resources for their own country and to find transport solutions through negotiations with states with closed borders are two clear examples of situations of such tensions. Social security may also be affected by the actions of political leaders who may exploit the pandemic to achieve their political goals in ways that may exacerbate domestic or internationalized crises, or escalate conflicts with some rival states. For example, against the background of Iran's efforts to fight the virus domestically, the Russian Federation is gaining ground in Syria<sup>91</sup>. Thus, if the pandemic can create opportunities to improve tense situations amid cooperation to counter it, it is also likely to exacerbate some crises at the international level.

An issue highlighted by the *UN Women*, which is growing in the Arab world in the context of the need for forced observance of domestic and international conditions of movement, is that of growing violence, which materializes in society through hostile speeches to governments, open protests or social networks, racist demonstrations against workers, immigrants and refugees of other nationalities hosted during the pandemic by certain states, but also through domestic violence caused or exacerbated by psychological traumas experienced by members of any family in a restricted environment and resources, respectively house environment. However, Qatar and the UAE are among the economic and social developed countries where there is concern about the existence of an optimal legal framework for addressing the gender gap and protecting women and children from abuse, all the more so in this extraordinary situation.

## 2. Forms of Response to the Crisis Generated by COVID-19

COVID-19 presents a multitude of new and complex challenges for more or less developed societies. Restrictions on the movement of people and goods, the suspension of certain economic and social activities, the closure of borders and the critical lack of protective equipment for medical personnel are some of the factors that have had a dramatic impact on the security of Middle Eastern states. Moreover, the implementation of basic health measures to prevent and control infections can be difficult due to the scarcity of resources, which affects all countries in the world. As the experience of the first affected countries (China, Italy, and Spain) has shown, resilience to COVID-19 requires unprecedented mobilization of health systems. Their quality plays a key role in the emergency and routine medical response capacity needed to treat infected people and limit subsequent infections. In this

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<sup>91</sup> Nick Grinstead, "As Iran redeploys amid COVID-19, Russia is filling the vacuum in eastern Syria", *Middle East Institute*, 5 June 2020, URL: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/iran-redeploys-amid-covid-19-russia-filling-vacuum-eastern-syria>, accessed on 10.06.2020.



sense, below we present some statistical data with the health resources from the states taken as reference (Table no. 5).

**Table no. 5:** Medical systems of the states established as a reference in the Middle East used against the pandemic

Mobilized health resources	Middle Eastern states						
	Iran	Turkey	Saudi Arabia	Qatar	UAE	Kuwait	Israel
No. of physicians / 1,000 inhabitants <sup>92</sup>	1,584 (2018 year)	1,849 (2017 year)	2,612 (2018 year)	2,485 (2018 year)	2,436 (2017 year)	2,646 (2015 year)	<b>4,625</b> (2018 year)
No. of hospital beds/ 1,000 inhabitants <sup>93</sup>	1.5 (2014 year)	<b>2.7</b> (2013 year)	2.7 (2014 year)	1.2 (2014 year)	1.4 (2017 year) <sup>94</sup>	2.0 (2014 year)	<b>3.1</b> (2013 year)
No. of ICU beds <sup>95</sup> / 100,000 inhabitants	4.6 <sup>96</sup>	<b>257</b> <sup>97</sup>	22.8 <sup>98</sup>	13.91 <sup>99</sup>	8.34 <sup>100</sup>	- <sup>101</sup>	237 <sup>102</sup>
Total number of tests / No. of tests to 1,000 inhabitants <sup>103</sup>	856,546/ 10.2	1,928,209**/ 22.86	770,696**/ 22.14	207,033**/ 71.86	2,110,493 <sup>104</sup> / <b>213.68</b>	282,341 <sup>105</sup> / 66.21	498,969* **/ 57.65

<sup>92</sup> \*\*\*, “Physicians (per 1,000 people) – Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Israel, Turkey, Iran, Islamic Rep., Saudi Arabia”, *The World Bank*, URL: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.MED.PHYS.ZS?locations=QA-AE-KW-IL-TR-IR-SA>, accessed on 22.05.2020.

<sup>93</sup> \*\*\*, “Hospital beds (per 1,000 people) – Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Israel, Turkey, Iran, Islamic Rep., Saudi Arabia”, *The World Bank*, URL: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.MED.BEDS.ZS?locations=QA-AE-KW-IL-TR-IR-SA>, accessed on 22.05.2020.

<sup>94</sup> \*\*\*, “Healthcare Resource Guide: United Arab Emirates”, *Export.Gov*, October 2019, URL: [https://2016.export.gov/industry/health/healthcareresourceguide/eg\\_main\\_108626.asp](https://2016.export.gov/industry/health/healthcareresourceguide/eg_main_108626.asp), accessed on 23.05.2020.

<sup>95</sup> A.N.: ICU beds for the severe cases with COVID-19, many end up in the lungs being ventilated and sustained in these wards.

<sup>96</sup> Jason Phua, Mohammad Omar Faruq, Atul P. Kulkarni, Ike Sri Redjeki, “Critical Care Bed Capacity in Asian Countries and Regions”, in *Critical Care Medicine*, No. 48(5):1, January 2020.

<sup>97</sup> A.N.: In December 2014. In conformity with: \*\*\*, “ICU Beds by Country”, *Trading Economics*, URL: <https://tradingeconomics.com/country-list/icu-beds>, accessed on 27.05.2020.

<sup>98</sup> \*\*\*, “Projections of ICU need by Country”, *Covid-19 Dashboard*, 10 June 2020, URL: <https://covid19dashboards.com/covid-progress-projections/>, accessed on 11.06.2020.

<sup>99</sup> Statement by the Chairman of the Health System Committee for Accident Control at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC). Details at: \*\*\*, “HMC: Nearly 3500 Additional Beds to Be Provided for Coronavirus Patients”, *This is Qatar*, 20 May 2020, URL: <https://tiq.qa/hmc-nearly-3500-additional-beds-to-be-provided-for-coronavirus-patients/>, accessed on 27.05.2020.

<sup>100</sup> \*\*\*, “Dubai clinical services capacity plan 2018-2030”, *Dubai Health Authority*, Government of Dubai, 2020, p. 32, URL: <https://www.dha.gov.ae/Documents/HRD/DCSCP-Report.pdf>, accessed on 27.05.2020.

<sup>101</sup> A.N.: I did not find any data to represent the indicator. However, there are estimates for 10 June 2020, which show that Kuwait needs a capacity of 5.39 beds/100,000 inhabitants to meet the current pandemic challenges. See: \*\*\*, “Projections of ICU need by Country”, *doc. cit.*



Table no. 5 shows that the United Arab Emirates is a positive case of a state with a very high testing capacity, similar to that of Western states, but also a developed medical infrastructure. Furthermore, this is reflected in the fact that the UAE has also provided the World Health Organization with 500,000 tests<sup>106</sup> to be administered in countries with deficits in this regard, in addition to the aid given to other states in the region. Turkey also shows itself to be a state with optimal hospital infrastructure to combat the pandemic, as does Israel, which asserts itself by the number of medical capabilities available (in terms of medical staff, hospital beds) to fight the new coronavirus. In fact, the quality of Turkey's medical system reflected in its mobilized medical resources had as consequence the low number of deaths due to COVID-19: about 4,200 deaths for 150,000 cases<sup>107</sup>.

We believe that counteracting the medical effects of the virus on the population depends on two major factors, respectively emergency medical capacity and testing capacity. On the one hand, there is Turkey, which on 19 June 2020, with a total number of 184,031 infections, had 4,882 deaths and 23,127 active cases, out of which 755 were in critical condition and the UAE had 300 deaths in a total of 44,145 infections and 12,849 active cases, of which one person was in critical condition, given that 2,822,316 tests were carried out in Turkey and 3,038,000 tests in the UAE<sup>108</sup>. Thus, the developments seem to be positive in both states. On the other hand, in Iran, the situation was different, with a total of 9,392 deaths and 31,678 active cases, out of which 2,833 were in critical condition. Obviously, at a simple calculation, in addition to the number of the lowest in the region in terms of people tested, referring to the large number of infections and given that the number of beds at ATI is 4.6/100,000 inhabitants (about 400 seats in total,

<sup>102</sup> A.N.: In December 2015. According to: \*\*\*, "ICU Beds by Country", *Trading Economics*, URL: <https://tradingeconomics.com/country-list/icu-beds>, accessed on 27.05.2020.

<sup>103</sup> Data collected in: Joe Hasell, Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, Edouard Mathieu, Hannah Ritchie, Diana Beltekian, Bobbie Macdonald and Max Roser, "Coronavirus (COVID-19) Testing", *Our World in Data*, 28 May 2020, URL: <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus-testing#download-the-data>, accessed on 28.05.2020.

\*Since 27 May 2020.

\*\* Since 28 May 2020.

<sup>104</sup> \*\*\*, "Number of coronavirus (COVID-19) tests performed in the most impacted countries worldwide as of May 29, 2020", *Statista*, URL: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1028731/covid19-tests-select-countries-worldwide/>, accessed on 29.05.2020.

<sup>105</sup> \*\*\*, "Coronavirus Cases", *Worldometers*, 28 May 2020, URL: [https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/?utm\\_campaign=homeADemocracynow\(2020\)%20dvegas1?](https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/?utm_campaign=homeADemocracynow(2020)%20dvegas1?), accessed on 29.05.2020.

\*\*\* Since 17 May 2020.

<sup>106</sup> \*\*\*, "UAE Contributes 500,000 COVID-19 Testing Kits worth USD 10 Million to World Health Organization", *OCHA*, 5 June 2020, URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/united-arab-emirates/uae-contributes-500000-covid-19-testing-kits-worth-usd-10-million-world>, accessed on 17.06.2020.

<sup>107</sup> See the situation in Figure no. 2.

<sup>108</sup> \*\*\*, "COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic", *Worldometers*, 19 June 2020, URL: [https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/?utm\\_campaign=homeAdUO A?Si](https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/?utm_campaign=homeAdUO A?Si), accessed on 19.06.2020.





considering the total population of Iran), there is a major overrun of hospital capacity which can be an important indicator for the high number of dead people.

In the following, the study will focus on actions taken at the national level, in which sense we present some indicators to characterize the government response capacity of the reference states in the Middle East (Table no. 6).

**Table no. 6:** Government measures to respond to the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

Types of response	Government resilience measures against COVID-19	Middle Eastern states (among those considered for analysis) where the measure was implemented						
		Iran 109,110	Turkey 111,112	Saudi Arabia 113, 114	Qatar 115, 116	UAE 117	Kuwait 118	Israel 119,120, 121
<b>For crisis</b>		Iran	Turkey	Saudi Arabia	Qatar	UAE	Kuwait	Israel
<b>Imposing economic measures</b>	Total/partial cessation of economic activities	partly	partly <sup>122</sup>	partly	partly <sup>123</sup>	partly	total	total
	Expulsion of foreigners	x <sup>124</sup>	x <sup>125</sup>	x <sup>126</sup>	x	x <sup>127</sup>	x <sup>128</sup>	x
	Tele-work	x	x	x	x <sup>129</sup>	x	x	x
	Stopping the activity of some public sectors	x	x	x <sup>130</sup>	x <sup>131</sup>	x	x <sup>132</sup>	x
<b>Restriction of rights and freedoms in the context of social distancing</b>	Cancellation/postponement of public events	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Closure of some neighbourhoods/localities/regions	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Closure of schools and universities	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Self-isolation and quarantine measures	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Triggering the state of emergency at national level	- <sup>133</sup>	-	-	-	-	x	x
	Restricting freedom of movement within the country	x	x	x	x <sup>134</sup>	x	x	x
	Suspension/limiting the public transport	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Restricting freedom of movement at the country's borders	x	x	x	x	x	x	x <sup>135</sup>
	"Stay home" policy	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Closure of public places (museums, churches, shops, etc.)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Closure of tourist attractions (parks, gardens, museums, etc.)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Prohibition of written publications, websites, video productions or mobile applications	x	x	x <sup>136</sup>	-	x	-	x <sup>137</sup>
Using the armed forces to implement measures	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
<b>Imposing the population to comply with sanitary measures</b>	Epidemiological triage of access to closed spaces	x	x	x	x	x <sup>138</sup>	x	x
	Obligation to wear masks and/or gloves in public places	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Mandatory disinfection	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Measures in the health system</b>	Emergency investments in health facilities	x	x	x <sup>139</sup>	x <sup>140</sup>	x	x	x
	Public information campaign	x <sup>141</sup>	x	x <sup>142</sup>	x	x	x	x
	Testing policy	x <sup>143</sup>	x	x	x	x	x	x





<sup>109</sup> A.N.: OCHA Bulletins on the progress of COVID-19 in Iran dated 10, 24 and 31 March, 8, 15, 21 and 28 April, 4, 12, 19 and 28 May 2020, URL: [https://reliefweb.int/updates?search=COVID&advanced-search=%28PC121\\_S1503\\_F10%29](https://reliefweb.int/updates?search=COVID&advanced-search=%28PC121_S1503_F10%29), accessed on 09.06.2020.

<sup>110</sup> Farnaz Fassihi, “Power Struggle Hampers Iran’s Coronavirus Response”, *The New York Times*, 17 March 2020, URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/world/middleeast/coronavirus-iran-rouhani.html>, accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>111</sup> Murat Paksoy, “COVID-19: Turkey model country with strong health system, social assistance”, *Anadolu Agency*, 11 April 2020, URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/health/covid-19-turkey-model-country-with-strong-health-system-social-assistance/1801007>, accessed on 17.06.2020.

<sup>112</sup> \*\*\*, “Turkish journalists arrested for reporting Covid-19 cases”, *Reporters Without Borders*, 11 May 2020, URL: <https://rsf.org/en/news/turkish-journalists-arrested-reporting-covid-19-cases>, accessed on 17.06.2020.

<sup>113</sup> \*\*\*, “Latest on coronavirus in the Middle East”, *Middle East Business Intelligence*, 17 June 2020, URL: <https://www.meed.com/latest-news-on-the-pandemics-economic-impact>, accessed on 17.06.2020.

<sup>114</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>115</sup> \*\*\*, “COVID-19 crisis response in MENA countries”, *OECD*, 9 June 2020, URL: <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/covid-19-crisis-response-in-mena-countries-4b366396/>, accessed on 09.06.2020.

<sup>116</sup> \*\*\*, “Qatar Government and institution measures in response to COVID-19”, *KPMG*, 3 June 2020, URL: <https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/qatar-government-and-institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html>, accessed on 07.06.2020.

<sup>117</sup> \*\*\*, “Handling the COVID-19 outbreak”, *UAE*, URL: <https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/justice-safety-and-the-law/handling-the-covid-19-outbreak>, accessed on 19.06.2020.

<sup>118</sup> Bader Al-Saif, “The Coronavirus in Kuwait: An Agent of Reform?”, *Carnegie Middle East Center*, 18 May 2020, URL: <https://carnegie-mec.org/2020/05/18/coronavirus-in-kuwait-agent-of-reform-pub-81828>, accessed on 09.06.2020.

<sup>119</sup> Afif Abub Much, “In Israel, coronavirus crisis improves Jewish-Arab relations”, *Al Monitor*, 10 May 2020, URL: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/05/israel-arabs-benjamin-netanyahu-yitzhak-rabin-joint-list.html>, accessed on 19.06.2020.

<sup>120</sup> \*\*\*, “The Coronavirus Pandemic and the Arab World: Impact, Politics, and Mitigation”, *Arab Center Washington DC*, 24 March 2020, URL: [http://arabcenterdc.org/policy\\_analyses/the-coronavirus-pandemic-and-the-arab-world-impact-politics-and-mitigation/](http://arabcenterdc.org/policy_analyses/the-coronavirus-pandemic-and-the-arab-world-impact-politics-and-mitigation/), accessed on 08.05.2020.

<sup>121</sup> \*\*\*, “Israel. Government and institution measures in response to COVID-19”, *KPMG*, 11 May 2020, URL: <https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/israel-government-and-institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html>, accessed on 19.05.2020.

<sup>122</sup> A.N.: In order not to interrupt the activity, Erdogan opted for targeted measures during the epidemic, such as imposing the lockdown only on weekends. See details at: V.M., “Şomaj masiv, prăbuşirea turismului, instabilitate monetară: “situaţia este extrem de proastă” în Turcia”, *HotNews*, 21 May 2020, URL: <https://economie.hotnews.ro/stiri-finante-24009786-turcia-situatie-economica-somaj-masiv-prabusire-turism-instabilitate-monetara.htm>, accessed on 09.06.2020.

<sup>123</sup> \*\*\*, “Qatar: Commercial activity suspended on weekends starting April 10 /update 16”, *Garda World News Alerts*, 9 April 2020, URL: <https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/330826/qatar-commercial-activity-suspended-on-weekends-starting-april-10-update-16>, accessed on 09.06.2020.

<sup>124</sup> Fatemeh Aman, “Afghan migrants: Unwanted in Iran and at home”, *The Atlantic Council*, 15 May 2020, URL: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/afghan-migrants-unwanted-in-iran>



and-at-home/, accessed on 16.05.2020.

<sup>125</sup> A.N.: EU reports show that Turkey is sending infected migrants to Greece and other Member States. See: \*\*\*, “Migrants infected with the coronavirus are being smuggled out of Turkey and encouraged to cross into Europe”, Parliamentary Questions, *European Parliament*, 13 April 2020.

<sup>126</sup> A.N.: The Saudi government has expelled thousands of foreign workers in an attempt to slow the spread of COVID-19. To be seen: Gregory Brew, “COVID-19 and the Oil Price Crash: Twin Crises Impacting Saudi-Iran Relations”, *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, 9 May 2020, URL: <https://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/covid-19-and-oil-price-crash-twin-crises-impacting-saudi-iran-relations>, accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>127</sup> \*\*\*, “UAE’s Indian expats frustrated over government coronavirus repatriation plans”, *Straits Time*, 7 May 2020, URL: <https://www.straitstimes.com/world/middle-east/uaes-indian-expats-frustrated-over-government-coronavirus-repatriation-plans>, accessed on 09.05.2020.

<sup>128</sup> A.N.: The deportation of foreign workers who have violated government restrictions is one of the measures taken by Kuwait in the context of the pandemic. Details at: \*\*\*, “Kuwait: Authorities announce plans to deport foreign workers who violate COVID-19 regulations May 19 /update 17”, *Garda World News Alert*, 21 May 2020, URL: <https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/344386/kuwait-authorities-announce-plans-to-deport-foreign-workers-who-violate-covid-19-regulations-may-19-update-17>, accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>129</sup> \*\*\*, “Covid-19: Ministry urges employers to maintain workers’ housing safe”, *Gulf Times*, 26 April 2020, URL: <https://m.gulf-times.com/story/661711/Covid-19-Ministry-urges-employers-to-maintain-workers-housing-safe>, accessed on 09.05.2020.

<sup>130</sup> All government departments (except medical institutions, military and security forces) will be closed from 16 March 2020 for 16 days. Details at: \*\*\*, “COVID-19 Saudi Arabia: Transportation and shipping sectors impact”, *Clyde & Co*, 18 March 2020, URL: <https://www.clydeco.com/insight/article/covid-19-update-the-impact-on-saudi-arabias-transportation-and-shipping-sec>, accessed on 09.06.2020.

<sup>131</sup> \*\*\*, “COVID-19 Alert: Qatar Tightens Restrictions on Nationwide Commercial Activities through May 30”, *World Aware*, 18 May 2020, URL: <https://www.worldaware.com/covid-19-alert-qatar-tightens-restrictions-nationwide-commercial-activities-through-may-30>, accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>132</sup> \*\*\*, “COVID-19: Kuwait expands curfew, extends public sector work suspension”, *Gulf News*, 21 April 2020, URL: <https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/kuwait/covid-19-kuwait-expands-curfew-extends-public-sector-work-suspension-1.1587470691614>

<sup>133</sup> A.N.: No state of emergency has been declared in Iran, so socio-economic activity has only partially closed. To be seen: Sanaz Alasti, “The Iranian Legal Response to Covid-19: A Constitutional Analysis of Coronavirus Lockdown”, *Verfassungsblog on constitutional matters*, 24 April 2020, URL: <https://verfassungsblog.de/the-iranian-legal-response-to-covid-19-a-constitutional-analysis-of-coronavirus-lockdown/>, accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>134</sup> A.N.: From May 22, 2020, the citizens of Qatar have the obligation to install on their phones the Ehteraz application, which indicates their health status. See: “COVID-19 Information”, *Carnegie Mellon University*, Qatar, 3 June 2020, URL: <https://www.qatar.cmu.edu/alert-covid-update/>, accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>135</sup> A.N.: Most international flights have been suspended, but there are still airlines operating at the end of June 2020.

<sup>136</sup> Jamiel Domingo, “Saudi imposes 5-year jail, SR3 million fine for posting curfew violation videos”, *Filipino Times*, 26 March 2020, URL: <https://filipinotimes.net/global-news/2020/03/26/saudi-imposes-5-year-jail-sr3-million-fine-for-posting-curfew-violation-videos/>, accessed on 09.05.2020.



Overall, the studied Middle Eastern states manage the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic by implementing economic, health and social distancing measures, which have blocked most socio-economic activities and restrictions on the movement of persons, as well as limiting universal human rights provided for by international law. Moreover, the state of emergency imposed in some of these states has created, encouraged and justified draconian measures, in the sense of citizens' surveillance in the context of limiting the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which have led to limiting and eroding their right to freedom of expression and movement, assembly, privacy etc. Therefore, governments, as the decision-making body that imposes the necessary restrictive legal framework to combat the pandemic, become the target pursued and judged by the constrained population, opposition parties, governments of other states and international human rights organizations, dissatisfied with the limiting decisions. The population's response to nationally imposed restrictive measures includes physical or online protests against coercive measures, online activism against governments in power, violations and xenophobic tendencies. Instead, the reactions of opposition political parties are manifested in political tensions. Governments can have different reactions towards

<sup>137</sup> A.N.: An extreme measure taken by Israel in the fight against the pandemic was to track down those infected with drones, but for legislative reasons the Israeli Supreme Court banned this form of monitoring at the end of April 2020. See: \*\*\*, "Israel's Supreme Court bans Shin Bet's COVID-19 tracking", *Asia News*, 28 April 2020, URL: <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Israels-Supreme-Court-bans-Shin-Bets-COVID-19-tracking-49939.html>, accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>138</sup> Theodore Karasik, "Lessons the US can learn from the UAE about the decontamination of COVID-19", *Atlantic Council*, 21 April 2020, URL: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/mena-source/lessons-the-us-can-learn-from-the-uae-about-the-decontamination-of-covid-19/>, accessed on 17.06.2020.

<sup>139</sup> A.N.: Saudi Arabia has begun construction of 25 hospitals. See details at: Layla Saleh, Larbi Sadiki, "The Arab world between a formidable virus and a repressive state", *Open Democracy*, 6 April 2020, URL: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/arab-world-between-formidable-virus-and-repressive-state/>, accessed on 07.06.2020.

<sup>140</sup> \*\*\*, "Qatar's private healthcare providers fully ready to cooperate to fight COVID-19", *The Peninsula Qatar*, 29 March 2020, URL: <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/29/03/2020/Qatar-s-private-healthcare-providers-fully-ready-to-cooperate-to-fight-COVID-19>, accessed on 07.06.2020.

<sup>141</sup> A.N.: The Iranian leadership's discourse is not one of informing the public, but rather of exploiting the crisis in political interest. See: Ramesh Sepehrrad, "Opinion – Iran's End Game beyond Coronavirus", *E-International Relations*, 7 April 2020.

<sup>142</sup> Abdullah F. Alrebh, "Saudi Response to Coronavirus Seen as Emphasizing Public Health, Not Internal Politics", *The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington*, 1 April 2020, URL <https://agsiw.org/saudi-response-to-coronavirus-seen-as-emphasizing-public-health-not-internal-politics/>, accessed on 09.06.2020.

<sup>143</sup> A.N.: Iran tested the least of the analysed states in terms of population (see Table no. 4).

\*\*\*, "The Impact of COVID-19 on the Middle East and North Africa", *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, 16 April 2020, URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/impact-covid-19-middle-east-and-north-africa>, accessed on 09.06.2020.



each other, to ally against the common “enemy” or to ignore one another or try to exploit the crisis for their own benefit.

Despite the different levels of preparedness of their health systems, most of the Middle East countries in the present study have developed general health management strategies characterized by strict isolation measures implemented from the very first stages of the outbreak, which have proved effective in limiting the spread of the pandemic in the region. From the analysis of the governments’ ability to respond to the global pandemic, one finds that some states, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have taken a number of preventive measures and minimized infections, while others, such as Iran and Turkey, have become foci of the spread of the virus due to inadequate, delayed and fragmented responses. For example, Riyadh has also implemented radical measures, such as preventing religious pilgrimage to the Islam’s holiest sites – Mecca and Medina<sup>144</sup>. In Qatar and Kuwait, not wearing masks in public spaces is punishable by up to 3 years in prison<sup>145</sup>. Therefore, the studied states had an optimal degree of resilience to the COVID-19 crisis, although the OCHA reports from February to June 2020 show that most Middle Eastern states encountered serious deficiencies in the supply of essential medical supplies, such as medical ventilators, masks and protective suits, disinfectants and test kits.

As of April 2020, Iran and Israel have begun the period of easing restrictions. Other states were somewhat more pragmatic. For example, the Saudi Minister of Health stated that “96% of intensive care facilities were not used”<sup>146</sup> in early May 2020, which justified the decision to drop some of the restrictions imposed. Government relaxation measures taken by June 2020 include those set out below.

Rapid and concerted responses, such as those of Saudi Arabia or the UAE, countries that have shown resilience to COVID-19, have allowed them to gradually ease restrictions on movement and economic activities with the help of balanced relaxation strategies. Regardless of the timing or pace of the relaxation strategy approached, the measures taken by the analysed states were largely similar. The table above shows that many countries in the Middle East have taken a number of economic and financial measures to enable economic recovery, such as: postponing taxes, reducing government taxes and fees, postponing loan repayments, postponing rents and utilities and governmental packages to support local economies. In this sense, there is the opportunity created by lower oil prices that can help the economic

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<sup>144</sup> \*\*\*, “The Impact of COVID-19 on the Middle East and North Africa”, *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, 16 April 2020, URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/impact-covid-19-middle-east-and-north-africa>, accessed on 09.06.2020.

<sup>145</sup> \*\*\*, “Wear a Mask or Face Jail in Kuwait and Qatar”, *NDTV*, 18 May 2020, URL: <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/covid-19-wear-a-mask-or-face-jail-in-kuwait-and-qatar-2230463>, accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>146</sup> \*\*\*, “Saudi health minister: 96% of Kingdom’s coronavirus allocated ICU beds remain empty”, *Arab News*, 6 May 2020, URL: [https://www.arabnews.jp/en/saudi-arabia/article\\_16679/](https://www.arabnews.jp/en/saudi-arabia/article_16679/), accessed on 22.05.2020.



recovery through lower transportation, heating and lighting costs for industrial and household consumers, implicitly lower costs for business and greater purchasing power of beneficiaries, which it can increase the profitability of companies and reduce the inflation of states. Therefore, the combined effect of lower fuel prices indirectly contributes to stimulating economic growth.

**Table no. 7:** Social-economic relaxation measures in the Middle East

Types of response	Government resilience measures against COVID-19	Middle Eastern states (among those considered in the analysis) where the measure was implemented						
		Iran <sup>147, 148</sup>	Turkey <sup>149, 150, 151</sup>	Saudi Arabia <sup>152, 153</sup>	Qatar <sup>154</sup>	UAE <sup>155</sup>	Kuwait <sup>156</sup>	Israel <sup>157</sup>
<b>Social-economic relaxation</b>								
<b>Economic</b>	Resumption of economic activities	April	May	May	June	May	May	April
<b>Financial</b>	Postponement of payment of loans to banks	x	x <sup>158</sup>	x	x	x	x	x
	Postponement of utility payments	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Fiscal relaxation measures	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Financial assistance granted to employees in forced unemployed	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	State support for companies	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Social</b>	Allowing outdoor public gatherings with limited number of people	-	x	x	x	x	-	x
	Relaxation of travel restrictions abroad	x	x <sup>159</sup>	-	x	-	x	-
	Opening of public places (museums, churches, shops etc.)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Relaxation of people's traffic hours	x	x	x	-	x	x	x
	Removal of restrictions for some former quarantined areas	x	x	x	-	x	x	x

<sup>147</sup> \*\*\*, "COVID-19 crisis response in MENA countries", OECD Policy Response to coronavirus, *OECD*, 9 June 2020, URL: <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/covid-19-crisis-response-in-mena-countries-4b366396/>, accessed on 20.06.2020.

<sup>148</sup> \*\*\*, "Iran: Authorities announce easing of COVID-19 measures May 23 /update 28", *Garda World News Alert*, 24 May 2020, URL: <https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/344961/iran-authorities-announce-easing-of-covid-19-measures-may-23-update-28>, accessed on 20.06.2020.

<sup>149</sup> \*\*\*, "Turkey. Government and institution measures in response to COVID-19", *KPMG*, 11 May 2020, URL: <https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/turkey-government-and-institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html>, accessed on 20.06.2020.





In addition to economic and financial measures, a number of social measures have been activated, for example, in Turkey, social relaxation is carried out according to the COVID-19 Normalization Plan<sup>160</sup>, which provides for a “dynamic” application based on how positive cases and the virus are being managed in the Turkish state and other states, but also on compliance with the rules imposed by social distance (1.5 m), the use of masks in public spaces and hygiene measures. The first relaxation measure targeted citizens over the age of 65 and under the age of 20 who were initially required to stay at home, who were allowed, from May 2020, to leave their home only once a week for 4 hours, for about two weeks. Also, the relaxation of the transport was done by allowing vehicles with odd and pair registration numbers to run on different days. Other measures were: lifting the restrictions on closing quarantined areas, opening barbershops and beauty salons

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<sup>150</sup> Pelin Baysal, Beril Yayla Sapan, “Coronavirus Support Package Announced on 18 March 2020 and Its Effects on Sectoral Basis”, *Gun and Partners Avukatlik Bürosu*, 23 March 2020, URL: <https://gun.av.tr/insights/articles/coronavirus-support-package-announced-on-18-march-2020-and-its-effects-on-sectoral-basis>, accessed on 20.06.2020.

<sup>151</sup> Gökhan Ergöçün, “Turkey passes bill to tackle pandemic’s impact”, *Anadolu Agency*, 6 April 2020, URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/latest-on-coronavirus-outbreak/turkey-passes-bill-to-tackle-pandemics-impact/1806673>, accessed on 20.06.2020.

<sup>152</sup> \*\*\*, “COVID-19 crisis response in MENA countries”, *art. cit.*

<sup>153</sup> \*\*\*, “COVID-19 Alert: Saudi Arabia Bans Gatherings of More Than Five People until Further”, *World Aware*, 7 May 2020, URL: <https://www.worldaware.com/covid-19-alert-saudi-arabia-bans-gatherings-more-five-people-until-further-notice>, accessed on 20.06.2020.

<sup>154</sup> A.N.: Relaxation measures have been announced in Qatar to be implemented from 15 June 2020, according to a four-phase plan. Details at: \*\*\*, “Plan to ease lock down restrictions announced. Qatar”, 9 June 2020, URL: <https://www.c19lexismena.com/2020/06/09/plan-to-ease-lock-down-restrictions-announced/>, accessed on 20.06.2020.

<sup>155</sup> \*\*\*, “COVID-19 crisis response in MENA countries”, *art. cit.*

<sup>156</sup> \*\*\*, “Israel/Palestinian Terr.: Authorities ease COVID-19 restrictions May 4 /update 30”, *Garda World News Alerts*, 5 May 2020, URL: <https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/339081/israel-palestinian-terr-authorities-ease-covid-19-restrictions-may-4-update-30>, accessed on 20.06.2020.

<sup>157</sup> \*\*\*, “Kuwait: Authorities to further ease COVID-19 restrictions from June 21/update 20”, *Garda World News Alerts*, 19 June 2020, URL: <https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/352171/kuwait-authorities-to-further-ease-covid-19-restrictions-from-june-21-update-20>, accessed on 20.06.2020.

<sup>158</sup> \*\*\*, “Turkey postpones TL 40.6B in loans for 795,000 citizens amid pandemic”, *Daily Sabah*, 13 April 2020, URL: <https://www.dailysabah.com/business/economy/turkey-postpones-tl-406b-in-loans-for-795000-citizens-amid-pandemic>, accessed on 15.06.2020.

<sup>159</sup> A.N.: Turkey opened its borders on 12 June 2020, but people arriving from pandemic risk areas must stay in self-isolation for 14 days. See: \*\*\*, “Coronavirus (COVID-19) travel restrictions in Turkey – updated 22 June, 2020”, *World Nomads*, 22 June 2020, URL: <https://www.worldnomads.com/travel-safety/middle-east/turkey/latest-turkey-travel-warnings-alerts>, accessed on 22.06.2020.

<sup>160</sup> \*\*\*, “COVID-19 Normalization Plan”, Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 4 May 2020, p. 3, URL: <https://www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com/export/sites/trade/files/attachments/COVID-19%20Normalization%20TURKEY.pdf>, accessed on 18.06.2020.





and malls in compliance with the necessary sanitary measures etc. On 1 June 2020, it started the second phase of gradual social relaxation, which consisted of the opening of public recreation facilities (swimming pools, wellness and spa salons, sports centres etc.), archaeological sites, outdoor tourist attractions, picnic areas etc., and also discontinuing the restriction of closing the economic activity at the end of the week.

In Iran, relaxation measures were taken in April 2020, at least a month earlier than in other states. This led to the disapproval of the WHO, which considered the measure inappropriate, in June 2020, there were discussions on a threat regarding a second wave of infections in Iran, as a result of “non-compliance with health protocols”<sup>161</sup>. One reason for the Iranian government’s hasty decision may be economic survival. In fact, the Institute for Middle East Studies shows that in Iran, almost a quarter of the 24 million working Iranians are day workers, which makes them vulnerable to the triple crisis (health, economic and social) because: they do not have fixed salaries, they have low savings and inadequate coverage in health insurance and social protection systems; they face the highest risk of infection because they do not have adequate means of medical protection; they cannot afford to stop working because they depend on their daily income<sup>162</sup>. Aware of this, the Iranian government chose between economy and public health in favour of the economy, avoiding the imposition of stricter quarantine measures recommended to slow down the spread of the virus, which would have had the obvious consequence of pushing that percentage of the population into extreme poverty, which could have caused a greater social unrest.

### **3. Regional Geopolitical Effects and Trends in the Context of the Pandemic**

The epidemics have no concern for nationalism or national borders, and SARS-CoV-2 has shown this very clearly. If we consider the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Middle East, we are referring to the triple transnational security crisis of *potential outbreaks of mass infection* (especially those in conflict areas, with a major impact on vulnerable people, respectively the elderly and people with current illnesses), *economic disturbances* and *social slippages* inherent in states of national crisis. All these dimensions of the crisis can have severe human and humanitarian consequences. In fact, there are a number of facilitators of the

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<sup>161</sup> \*\*\*, “Iran health chiefs fear ‘second wave’ of pandemic”, *Arab News*, 10 May 2020, URL: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1672551/middle-east>, accessed on 18.06.2020.

<sup>162</sup> Amin Mohseni-Cheraghloou, “Iran and the economic fallout of COVID-19”, *Middle East Institute*, 14 April 2020, URL: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/iran-and-economic-fallout-covid-19>, accessed on 08.06.2020.



rapid spread of the new coronavirus in the Arab region: numerous human contacts with countries heavily affected by the pandemic (Iran, European countries and China), high population density in many Arab cities, lack of means to detect and treat cases of infection, the social closeness associated with Arab and Mediterranean cultures, as well as the high proportion of young people with high mobility who can contribute to the spread of the pandemic in the social and family environment.

The social security crisis identified as affecting states and supranational organizations globally has the potential to manifest itself more fervently in the Middle East, amid conflict zones in the region, where millions of people are already facing poor or non-existent medical systems, limited food, water and electricity resources, low living standards, prices increase and destroyed infrastructure. Thus, among the possible regional effects there is also the serious deterioration of some vital economic and social indicators, the deepening of the humanitarian crisis, the intensification of the regional conflict, the acceleration of the political fragmentation, the deepening of the food and drinking water crisis etc. In fact, a pandemic never generates only a crisis in the field of health, but brings with it a series of other crises, in addition to those already mentioned. Add to this the identity crisis caused by the fact that individuals belonging to a democratic or pseudo-democratic regime suddenly feel compelled to adapt to actions specific to an authoritarian regime. In this context, there is a constant fear of the other, so that human, a social being, tends to become an anti-social being, and the mechanisms of maintaining physical distance in society generate changes in the behaviour of individuals, as a result of changing practices involving physical interaction (for example, the handshake).

Recent events have also shown that the pandemic caused by the spread of COVID-19 must be addressed not only as a threat to health and a socio-economic risk, but also as a threat to the physical and mental security of communities and individuals and thus it affects social security as a whole. There are voices saying that “the world will not be the same”<sup>163</sup> after this pandemic.

Change generates resistance, opposition and sometimes conflict. Therefore, negative social trends need to be identified and controlled in advance, especially in conflict regions such as the Middle East. Israel is the only democratic country among those analysed in the Middle East, the others have authoritarian regimes, with a wider or narrower openness to democracy but which, however, do not face

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<sup>163</sup> For instance: Daniel Susskind, James Manyika Jean Saldanha, Sharan Burrow, Sergio Rebelo Ian Bremmer, “How will the world be different after COVID-19?”, *International Monetary Fund*, Finance and Development, June 2020, URL: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2020/06/pdf/how-will-the-world-be-different-after-COVID-19.pdf>; Suzy Taherian, “The New World: How The World Will Be Different After COVID-19”, *Forbes*, 7 April 2020, URL: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/suzytaherian/2020/04/07/the-new-world-how-the-world-will-be-different-after-covid-19/#6e9ec5d65d15>, accessed on 10.06.2020.



internal military conflicts, which can contribute to increasing tolerance of the population to the strict rules during the pandemic. However, there are experts who believe that a strong emphasis is needed in this region on reducing tensions and strengthening resilience<sup>164</sup>, especially in vulnerable categories and regions.

In the analysis of regional geopolitical effects and trends in the context of the pandemic, another aspect worth considering is that of population migration. There are 35 million immigrants in the GCC states alone<sup>165</sup>. For example, the immigrants and refugees hosted by the states analysed in this paper are special categories of people who are forced to live in crowded areas, have limited access to health services and public information campaigns on the minimum measures to be taken in the pandemic context, which makes them vulnerable to contact with the viral infection. In fact, there are signals in this regard in all Middle Eastern states hosting immigrants. For example, in Saudi Arabia, non-Saudi residents account for 76% of new cases of illness, with similar situations in Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, the UAE, Jordan and Lebanon<sup>166</sup>. Therefore, national and local authorities, civil society and international organizations carry out public agenda targeting immigrant communities to ensure that everyone has access to the necessary information on health guidelines and COVID-19 measures. In some cases, information services also try to let people know as much possible that they can receive treatment to relieve symptoms caused by the virus, even if they are not covered by the national social health insurance plan<sup>167</sup>. However, most of the analysed states have applied a policy of repatriation of some foreign citizens, in order to avoid their getting sick and, implicitly, of their native population.

There are also international funds mobilized to provide a minimum of medical services in the current health crisis. In this regard, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has allocated 235 million dollars<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Maria Vink, "Don't forget the security aspect of the Covid-19 crisis", *Stockholm International Water Institute*, 30 April 2020, URL: <https://www.siwi.org/latest/dont-forget-the-security-aspect-of-the-covid-19-crisis/>, accessed on 10.06.2020.

<sup>165</sup> Ruth Sherlock, "Migrants Are among the Worst Hit by COVID-19 in Saudi Arabia and Gulf Countries", *NPR*, 5 May 2020, URL: <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/05/05/850542938/migrants-are-among-the-worst-hit-by-covid-19-in-saudi-arabia-and-gulf-countries?t=1591696410160>, accessed on 08.06.2020.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>167</sup> \*\*\*, "Covid-19 Notes on Migrants - An ICMHD Health Policy Contribution", *International Centre for Migration, Health and Development*, 9 June 2020, URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/covid-19-notes-migrants-icmhd-health-policy-contribution>, accessed on 09.06.2020.

<sup>168</sup> \*\*\*, "OCHA pooled funds response to COVID-19. Pooled Funds (CERF & CBPFs) Response to COVID-19 pandemic", *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, 8 June 2020, p. 1, URL: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/COVID19\\_OCHA%20Pooled%20Funds\\_20200608.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/COVID19_OCHA%20Pooled%20Funds_20200608.pdf), accessed on 09.06.2020.



to address the pandemic as a whole and the problems of vulnerable groups in particular. Also, although this aspect goes beyond the geographical area proposed for analysis, we note that the United Nations is the main international player acting to stop COVID-19 from taking control of the already conflicting regions of the Middle East, where the needs for humanitarian aid are already enormous. Moreover, in order to limit the spread of the virus in such regions, the UN Secretary-General made a series of calls for “immediate ceasefire in all corners of the globe, in order to prevent a major health crisis from destroying even more the conflict zones”<sup>169</sup>. The United Nations also launched on 25 March 2020, a 2 billion dollars coordinated global humanitarian response plan to combat COVID-19 in countries with tense humanitarian situations<sup>170</sup>. In fact, UNHCR also supports the Middle East countries with equipment and medicines, such as Iran<sup>171</sup> and Turkey, which host refugees and migrants. Thus, the calculations made by this organization show that Iran needs 18.6 million dollars to be able to optimally manage the coronavirus<sup>172</sup>. Anti-COVID-19 measures taken in Iran also include an inclusive policy, meaning that refugees and people of other nationalities have free access to tests, treatment and hospitalization.

In addition to the states taken as reference in the present study, from the category of stable or relatively politically stable entities (Turkey, Iran, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Israel), one may consider that for the 4 states of the region already affected by conflicts (Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Libya), the pandemic is a massive challenge, which deepens the existing structural vulnerability, generating social insecurity and, implicitly, exacerbating the security crisis. It is also possible that systemic vulnerabilities caused by the economic downturn and population restrictions to be exploited by extremist groups and advocates of a more radical realignment of the region’s policy. That is why, more than ever, there is a need for cooperation and collective solutions throughout the region to meet this level of challenge.

Moreover, if one takes into account the fact that violence is the central criterion for differentiating the states of aggregation of the peace-war continuum, in the context of combating the pandemic we should note individuals’ tendency to pull together beyond their differences to facilitate the implementation of public health measures. Moreover, even in fragmented states on ethnic-religious grounds,

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<sup>169</sup> \*\*\*, “UN repeats call for ceasefire as it works to save Middle East from COVID-19”, *Department of Global Communication, UN*, 8 April 2020, URL: <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/un-repeats-call-ceasefire-it-works-save-middle-east-covid-19>, accessed on 25.05.2020.

<sup>170</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>171</sup> \*\*\*, “COVID-19 response in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, *The UN Refugee Agency*, April 2020, p. 1, URL: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/76056.pdf>, accessed on 26.05.2020.

<sup>172</sup> *Idem*.



the emergence of new actors with a role in shaping and implementing policies or measures to combat the new type of coronavirus is visible, in the sense that in some states, places of worship, medical unions or local governments have taken the initiative, without waiting for directives from the central level<sup>173</sup>. This fact is also identified at the interstate level by the ceasefire agreements during the coronavirus crisis, at the call of the UN Secretary General. Relevant examples in this regard are the agreement between Russia and Turkey on the war in Syria, the unilateral declaration of Saudi Arabia, as regards Yemen, the agreement between Israel and Palestine, but also the aid given even between geopolitical rivals (Iran has been supported with medical resources by states such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar), which in itself constitutes acts of civilizing conflicts by limiting violence, representing a step forward towards regional pacification.

### Conclusions

In early 2020, the Middle East found itself in a volatile security situation, mainly due to ongoing internationalized military conflicts, generated and sustained by the political and ethnic-religious fragmentation remaining in the Arab Spring and the struggle for regional supremacy, which have already exacerbated economic problems (widespread youth unemployment, inflation, lack of critical infrastructure, food or drinking water crises, poor social systems). Also, in this environment of regional instability, negative social manifestations such as terrorism, violent extremism, insurgency, illegal migration, trafficking of human beings and drugs persisted, to name the most acute. Moreover, one of the main causes of the “Arab Spring” protests that engulfed the Middle East and brought popular discontent was its poor quality in the provision of basic services, including health services.

On this background, the new coronavirus, named by the international medical community SARS-CoV-2 and, subsequently, by the specialized and general media, COVID-19, has emerged. In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, when these regions became immediate subjects of the trend (identified globally) of overloading the capacity of medical systems, the main effect generated was a health crisis. Subsequently, the closure of economic activities, as a measure of social distancing taken by governments to limit the spread of the virus within the communities, led to the economic crisis, and restricting the freedom of movement of individuals in public places triggered a specific type of social security crisis.

Some countries in this region have understood that the only way out of the crisis is a fully coordinated global response, which addresses the root causes of the

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<sup>173</sup> \*\*\*, “Civil Society Organizations in Yemen Call for Comprehensive Mobilization and Unity to Confront Coronavirus Pandemic”, *OCHA*, April 2020.



pandemic, while mitigating both the health impact and the economic repercussions. For example, when oil prices plummeted in the spring of 2020 due to the economic slowdown and the COVID-19 pandemic-specific measures, OPEC and its allies agreed on massive production reductions to stabilize prices, which fell to similar, minimum levels to those of 20 years ago.

The measures taken by the governments of the Middle East countries to combat the spread of COVID-19 are massive and unprecedented, with the response to the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic requiring a complex and inter-sectoral approach achieved by multi-level governmental intervention. Immediate crisis measures have been initiated in this direction (mobilization of health care activity by prioritizing resources to cure COVID-19-infected patients, social distancing measures to prevent the spread of the virus at community level, domestic and international financial measures to help states in their medical effort) and measures of socio-economic relaxation in the context in which some states considered that they can control diseases by maintaining health rules and physical distance in public spaces.

As a result of the restrictive measures, life has reached an almost complete stage of isolation. From what is presented in this paper, it results that in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, the political response to the crisis has been swift, which highlights an unexpected resilience, despite the economic resources diminished by the decrease in oil prices. Saudi Arabia quickly closed its borders, shut down public sector activity, malls and restaurants, and banned access to holy shrines and pilgrimages. Qatar has suspended flights to several countries, and the United Arab Emirates have blocked all activities nationwide for a few weeks and imposed a mandatory 14-day self-quarantine for all travellers returning to the country. Also, Israel, by completely shutting down the activity for a few weeks, has ensured a lower rate of infection among the population.

However, there have also been less pandemic-resilient states, such as Iran, which has only partially ceased economic activity for fear of major social unrest caused by the working class left without a daily livelihood, but has implemented far too quickly a relaxation strategy. Iran's weak resilience is demonstrated by the upward trend in the number of diseases since the end of June 2020, compared to Turkey. The latter has half active cases and deaths compared to Iran, with an approximately equal number of the population, hosting the largest number of refugees and immigrants in the world (about 4 million people, compared to 3 million in Iran), vulnerable to infection due to living conditions and lack of information on how the disease is transmitted and protect against COVID-19.

Currently, the regional target is to control the spread of the virus to conflict-affected states and those in very poor areas, where medical systems are almost non-existent. For the analysed states, the goal is to create the premises for the gradual return to a situation of relative normality of economic and social life, by relaxing





the measures imposed during the peak of the pandemic. In fact, in mid-2020, the governments of the states affected by the health crisis must balance the need to resume economic activity, with respect for social distance measures that limit the spread of the virus until the discovery of a vaccine. In this context, it is foreseeable that the governments of the Middle Eastern states that manage to maintain the balance between these two aspects will be able to stay in power.



# THE LIBIAN CONFLICT AND ITS DESTABILISING IMPACT ON NORTH AFRICA

*Crăişor-Constantin IONIŢĂ, PhD\**

After the violent disappearance of the former dictator, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, in 2011, Libya became a bankrupt, ungovernable state. Even if the current Government of National Accord (GNA), led by Prime Minister Fayez Sarrai, was immediately recognized by the UN, in 2014, a bloody civil war broke out on Libyan territory, following the offensive actions of General Khalifa Haftar (known as “Hifter” in some articles), former Gaddafi commander, to conquer Tripoli.

General Haftar created the Libyan Liberation Army (LNA), also known as the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), with the initial official purpose to fight against Islamic terrorists from DAESH-Libya (DAESH-L) and Ansar al Sharia-Libya (AAS-L). Subsequently, his intentions became much more expansionist, turning against the Libyan government and gaining the support of several neighboring countries for his cause. Its goal thus became full control of Libyan oil production, the country’s greatest economical resource.

In his fight on two fronts, the one against GNA and the other to eliminate jihadist fighters in Libya, General Haftar received arms and ammunition support from some states with interests in the area, such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, Jordan and Russia. Thus, starting with April 2019, he went on to conquer the city of Tripoli, the capital of Libya, unleashing a bloody war that does not seem to end soon. On the contrary, it seems to be expanding. Even the emergence of the new coronavirus in North Africa and the Sahel Region has failed to stop internal fighting or reach a ceasefire agreement.

At this time, it is difficult to say who is the US supporting. The US Strategic Command for Africa (AFRICOM) is more interested in reducing its presence in the area, as a result of protective measures being taken against the coronavirus disease.

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In turn, Germany's position, which would like to take the initiative of a neutral power to mediate the conclusion of a Peace Agreement, is, however, considered too little visible.

### **1. Parties Involved in the Conflict and Covered Actions of Regional Powers to Support Them**

Once in power, the Government of National Accord was the only temporary solution to governing Libya and ending state division. As a result, it was immediately recognized by the UN. Its leader, Fayez Serraj, tried to lead the country only from the capital, but there are many areas where he no longer has any control. Especially since it has been repeatedly stated that he was empowered by some European countries, such as Italy<sup>1</sup>. Prime-Minister Serraj also received unexpected support from a newly formed coalition of rival Western fighters, who, along with the Tripoli militia, are defending the capital city.

In its attempt to stop illegal migration from Libya, Italy has allied with Serraj's government, providing support for the return of immigrants back on Libyan coast. This alliance did not please France and produced some failure to the EU's repeated attempts to find ways to cease fire and establish humanitarian corridors.

Earlier this year, Turkey signed an agreement with the Libyan government to stop foreign interference and support its fight with warships and Syrian mercenaries. Up to this date, more than 2,500 foreign fighters, most of them from Syria, have strengthened the power of Tripoli's defenders<sup>2</sup>. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has also sent military instructors, combat drones and Air Defence systems to Libya. The death rate among Turkish contingent is about 18. In a press conference, the French President Emmanuel Macron criticized this act, considering it "null and avoidable<sup>3</sup>", being conducted for maintaining a state of tension in the area.

Immediately after its establishment, the Libyan Liberation Army, led by General Khalifa Haftar, started to restore security in the Northern part of Libya, fighting against extremist groups and local crime.

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Allinson, "Lybia's battle for Tripoli – what you need to know", *Deutsche Welle*, 17 April 2019, URL: <https://www.dw.com/en/libyas-battle-for-tripoli-what-you-need-to-know/a-48374754>, accessed on 15.02.2020.

<sup>2</sup> Suzan Fraser, "Turkey says 2 Turkish soldiers killed in Lybia", *Associated Press*, February 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/dfd3b5fa023de3913c172656267de75c>, accessed on 18.03.2020.

<sup>3</sup> Joint Press Conference of French President with the Greek Prim-Minister on 30 January 2020. To quote: \*\*\*, "Macron: Turkey is sending warships, mercenaries to Lybia", *Associated Press*, 30 January 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/c9abff23f81991d63311183331a27fff>, accessed on 15.03.2020

The intention of the LNA was to show to foreign allies that it can fight terrorism, even if Salafist fighters also act in their forces. However, many Libyan detractors have accused General Haftar of wanting to control the whole of Libya, becoming “a second Gaddafi”<sup>5</sup>.

Externally, the LNA is supported primarily by Egypt, which sees General Haftar as a powerful military man capable of controlling the border between the two states and preventing Islamists from governing. Saudi Arabia and the UAE support General Haftar with mercenaries from Chad, Sudan and Syria, but also with armored vehicles, to prevent the strengthening of the Muslim Brotherhood’s position in the area. France, although initially against attacking Tripoli, has been secretly supporting the LNA since 2015<sup>6</sup>, and French soldiers launched an attack on Islamists in the Southern part of Libya. Together with Russia, which wants to maintain the arms trade in Libya, France has blocked a UN Resolution, calling for the condemnation of General Haftar’s actions and calling to put an end to attacks on the capital. Russia has sent between 800 to 1,200 mercenaries from the Wagner Group (a private security company) to the area, as well as Air Defence systems and other high-tech systems<sup>7</sup>. AFRICOM has accused Russia of sending 14 painted fighter jets at the Al-Jufra Air Base in South Libya to not show their official insignia<sup>8</sup>. Even China has also sent drones



**Figure no. 1:** The situation of main actors in the Libyan Civil War<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Source: \*\*\*, “Libya”, *Liveuamap*, URL: [libya.liveuamap.com](http://libya.liveuamap.com), January 16, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Tom Allinson, *art. cit.*.

<sup>6</sup> Emadeddin Badi, “Russia isn’t the Only One Getting its Hands Dirty in Libya”, *Foreign Policy*, aprilie 2020, URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/21/libyan-civil-war-france-uae-khalifa-haftar/>, accesat la 02.07.2020.

<sup>7</sup> Robyn Dixon, “Russia’s ally in Libya is battered by defeats. But Moscow has wider goals to expand its influence”, *The Washington Post*, June 2020, URL: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russia-libya-war-putin/2020/06/05/c3956bf4-a109-11ea-be06-af5514ee0385\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russia-libya-war-putin/2020/06/05/c3956bf4-a109-11ea-be06-af5514ee0385_story.html), accessed on 02.07.2020

<sup>8</sup> Samy Magdy, “US military says Russia deployed fighter jets to Libya”, *Associated Press*, May



acting at long distance to the area<sup>9</sup>.

Other actors in the conflict are represented by extremist groups acting in the Southern part of the country, such as DAESH-Libya and Ansar al-Sharia Libya, who fight for establishing a Libyan Islamic Emirate. Being created to destabilize the country and prevent the proper functioning of the oil industry through terrorist actions, the two transnational terrorist organizations are supported by Qatar and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. The transnational character of these extremist groups is due to the presence of former jihadist fighters from al-Qaeda (AAS-L) and ISIS (DAESH-L), as well as their close ties with other similar terrorist groups in the region, such as DAESH-Syria, the Muslim Brotherhood, or Ansar al-Sharia from Algeria. The position and demarcation lines of the belligerents are presented in Figure no.1.

We must not forget the civilian population trapped in conflict areas that cannot be evacuated because of the frequent changes in the situation and moves of the demarcation lines. Non-discriminatory bombings are frequent in areas inhabited by local civilians, and reports by UN officials have gone beyond awareness. Moreover, the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) organization draws attention to the presence of a large number of immigrants imprisoned in detention centers located in these conflict areas, whose humanitarian situation is disastrous and their security is not ensured<sup>10</sup>.

The last major confrontation between the belligerents took place in the second half of May 2020, when forces loyal to the UN-backed Libyan government, supported by Turkey, managed to drive out the LNA from al-Waitya Air Base in the Southern desert area, West of Tripoli and which was a strong fortress for General Haftar. In fact, this was the airport where he received weapons and military equipment from supporting states. The result of this defeat, along with the loss, in the last two months, of several western cities (including Sabrata, Sorman and al-Asabaa, located on the main supply axis in South-East), forced LNA forces to withdraw 2-3 km from the Southern edge of the capital and to set up a buffer zone around the city, to allow the celebration of Ramadan by the inhabitants and their families<sup>11</sup>. A proposal for a temporary ceasefire was made by General Haftar, but this could facilitate the resumption of attacks on Tripoli, especially with air forces provided by Russia.

Currently, the LNA controls the eastern and largely southern part of Libya, while the UN-backed government has control over the west of the country and the capital Tripoli.

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2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/35c59fe74f914b08aa866ffabcb438e9>, accessed on 28.05.2020.

<sup>9</sup> Frederic Wehrey, Sandy Alkoutami, "China's Balancing Act in Libya", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, May 2020, URL: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/05/10/china-s-balancing-act-in-libya-pub-81757>, accessed on 03.07.2020

<sup>10</sup> Tom Allinson, *art. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> Edith M. Lederer, "UN: Impact of long Libya war on civilians is 'incalculable'", *Associated Press*, February 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/333fe41a6bab5d9223aa563507733a03>, accessed on 10.05.2020.



## 2. The Impact of the Libyan Civil War's Last Year on Local Population

The recent General Haftar's LNA offensive and destabilizing actions against Tripoli and the oil-rich areas from South and the East coast, have had a disastrous impact on both the population living in the conflict areas and of the country's oil production<sup>12</sup>. The closure, at the beginning of the year, of several large oil terminals, caused the National Petroleum Corporation losses of 1.7 billion dollars in January and February 2020. Daily oil production decreased to 123,537 barrels from approx. 1.2 million barrels last year. That means a daily loss of \$ 60.2 million<sup>13</sup>.

The bomb attack on the port of Tripoli, which took place during the Geneva peace talks, led to a halt to the drilling and transportation of oil and gas products of the National Petroleum Corporation, with incalculable consequences for providing vital services to the city.

Another negative aspect of the Civil War's last year is the large and continuous flow of foreign fighters who came to Libya to take part in the conflict. Turkey has sent hundreds of Syrian fighters to the area, including militants affiliated to extremist groups such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, to fight alongside the Libyan government<sup>14</sup>. In turn, General Haftar relies on hundreds of Russian mercenaries. Recently, a UN report stated that Sudanese groups from Darfur area also joined the two warlike parties<sup>15</sup>. The only positive aspect of the emergence of these mercenary fighters is the common position of the two parties to safeguard Libya's territorial integrity and stop the flow of non-Libyan fighters in the local conflict.

Nor the civilian population caught in the conflict is doing better. Since the start of the new offensive on Tripoli, 900,000 homeless people have required humanitarian assistance<sup>16</sup>. And this is true not only in the capital city, but in all other Libyan areas, as a result of numerous attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, especially public health, which has doubled compared to last year, reaching at least 650 civilians killed or injured. The last attack took place on May 16, 2020, when Tripoli and its surroundings were bombed (about 100 bombs and missiles),

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<sup>12</sup> A.N.: Libya is the ninth country with oil resources in the World and the first one in Africa.

<sup>13</sup> Jamey Keaten, Samy Magdy, "UN-backed government in Libya suspends talks after attack", *Associated Press*, February 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/1c47bfe8474e110e4ecd040e37a2ae6b>, accessed on 10.05.2020.

<sup>14</sup> Semih Idiz, "Turkey's intervention in Libya turns tide to Erdogan's advantage, for now", *Al-Monitor*, May 2020, URL: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/05/turkey-libya-intervention-turns-tide-to-erdogan-sarraj.html>, accessed on 03.07.2020.

<sup>15</sup> Nina Pouls, Umberto Profazio, "Sudanese militias play instrumental role in Libya's conflict", *International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)*, January 2020, URL: <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2020/01/csdp-sudanese-militias-in-libya>, accessed on 03.07.2020.

<sup>16</sup> Edith M. Lederer, *art. cit.*





destroying a refugee shelter of the Libyan Ministry of Health, killing seven people (including a 5-year old from Bangladesh) and injuring 17 individuals<sup>17</sup>. In fact, since the beginning of May 2020, 15 civilians have been killed and 50 have been injured. At the end of last year, more than 345,000 people had fled their homes, escaping conflict areas, including 150,000 in and around Tripoli. Most of them were women and children, and 30% were immigrants or refugees<sup>18</sup>.

A new risk to population's health, which is still smaller, is the increasing number of people infected with COVID-19. Despite international pressure on stakeholders to move to pandemic peace talks, by May 20, 2020, Libya reported 65 cases of infected people, including three deceased<sup>19</sup>. As a consequence of this virus' emergence in the area, several maritime rescue organizations, such as Ocean Viking and Sea-Watch, have suspended their rescue activities for immigrants, which has led to an increase in the number of people drowned and shipwrecked<sup>20</sup>. In fact, experts from international and regional organizations believe that there is a great danger of the future escalation of the pandemic in the area.

It also became difficult to provide emergency social services in Tripoli, especially public health, education and the collection of household refuse. The major risk in the capital city is that if the electricity supply would be cut off, then there will be a crisis of drinking and domestic water in the city. Moreover, as a result of the outbreak and spread of the coronavirus pandemic in North Africa and the Sahel region, most Libyan cities are feeling the lack of basic foodstuffs, as well as a substantial increase in their prices. Humanitarian organizations have reported 951 incidents of banning the transport of food and humanitarian personnel or their movement within Libya<sup>21</sup>.

Banking services are not better either, as there is an acute shortage of cash in Tripoli and the possibility of two banks going bankrupt. This has a major impact on the population ability to access their own funds and payments made by some humanitarian organizations as well.

The only functioning airport in the Tripoli area, Mitiga International Airport, was temporarily closed, following a Grad missile bombardment and the imposing of a No-Fly Zone by General Haftar's forces<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Samy Magdy, "Officials: Bombs kill 7 in shelter for displaced in Libya", *Associated Press*, May 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/9ae2cb50216454988ea5cb5a26041349>, accessed on 28.05.2020.

<sup>18</sup> Edith M. Lederer, *op. cit.*.

<sup>19</sup> Edith M. Lederer, "UN official warns of escalating Libyan war citing foreigners", *Associated Press*, May 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/f023aa2f2bb122b521d0e328d077a051>, accessed on 27.05.2020.

<sup>20</sup> \*\*\*, "UN: Libya coast guard intercepts, detains about 400 migrants", *Associated Press*, 25 May 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/e17fbb5d5483e1731b6e73b4a84fd3cb>, accessed on 28.05.2020.

<sup>21</sup> Edith M. Lederer, *op. cit.*.

<sup>22</sup> Aomar Ouali, "Libya's neighbors, global envoys seek solutions to conflict", *Associated Press*,



At the same time, Italy's agreement with the Libyan Coast Guard, signed about three years ago, to capture and return illegal migrants to inland detention centers has caused and continues to seriously damage the freedom of movement and security of immigrants who try to reach the European continent. This is because in the eleven miserable detention centers, owned by local militias, there are about 5,000 immigrants who suffer rape, torture and other abuses<sup>23</sup>. Moreover, since this agreement has entered into force, the Libyan naval forces have intercepted about 40,000 immigrants from the Libyan coastal area and returned them to the conflict region, reaching an increase of 121% of immigrants captured in the last month, compared to the same period of the year. last. Since the beginning of this year, more than 3,200 immigrants have been intercepted at sea and returned to detention centers<sup>24</sup>. These figures were indeed reflected in the declining number of immigrants arriving in Italy or Malta, but criticism of the Italian government has skyrocketed, especially from Humanitarian Organizations. Moreover, the total number of people drowned or killed during the attempts to cross the Mediterranean Sea reached 20,000 immigrants, according to a report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM)<sup>25</sup>.

Illegal human trafficking in North African coastal countries has become quite dangerous and a highly profitable business for criminal groups, allied with extremist groups fighting for the creation of a Libyan Islamic Emirate. Thus, at the end of May, 30 illegal immigrants were killed and 11 others injured in a smuggling depot in the desert town of Mizdah<sup>26</sup>. These immigrants, mostly from Bangladesh, were trafficked through India, the UAE and Egypt to reach Europe, but ended up being asked to pay ransom by their families.

The new UN Secretary-General's Interim Special Representative in Libya, Stephanie Williams, has repeatedly pointed out, especially recently, that the Libyan Civil War will intensify, spread and deepen into skirmishes. As a result, the increase in foreign intervention and the illegal trafficking of arms, military equipment and mercenaries to both parties, will have devastating consequences for the population, which, in the midst of fighting, will have no chance to defend and protect itself, or to make their voices heard.

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23 January 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/70d551521d1b239f4a485dc3edc962e6>, accessed on 26.05.2020.

<sup>23</sup> Isabel Debre, "Rights group: Italy-Libya deal puts migrants in danger", *Associated Press*, 12 February 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/0c232afd9fcb85cad5d7c90412980f13>, accessed on 25.05.2020.

<sup>24</sup> Edith M. Leaderer, "7 UN agencies urge Libya cease-fire to contain coronavirus", *Associated Press*, 14 May 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/1e6f5ef8809c06a7822b43b822cdc9bb>, accessed on 29.05.2020.

<sup>25</sup> \*\*\*, "UN: Libyan coast guard intercepts 71 Europe-bound migrants", *Associated Press*, 25 June 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/4202129146052ad5e7ad131405e5ba96>, accessed on 06.07.2020.

<sup>26</sup> Julhas Alam, "Bangladesh arrests at least 19 suspected people smugglers", *Associated Press*, 8 June 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/17e058f87a829f613c93fd65beeb33d0>, accessed on 11.06.2020.



### 3. Germany's Role and the Berlin Agreement

As a neutral power, since the beginning of the year, Germany has sought to bring both main internal actors of this conflict to the negotiating table, together with all international actors involved and neighbouring states. It also put repeated pressure on Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi to de-escalate the situation on Libya's Eastern border.

Thus, before the conference, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, had had a meeting, on 16 January, in Benghazi (LNA Central Command) with General Haftar, to reach consensus on concluding a ceasefire agreement. The meeting also took place following the failure of negotiations in Moscow, on 14 January, under the auspices of a joint Russia-Turkey approach, between the two leaders of the main parties involved into the conflict – Prime Minister Fayeza Sarraj and General Khalifa Haftar –, in order to reach a truce<sup>27</sup>. The latter left negotiations, stating that he still needs time to think and consult with his sponsors.

Also before the conference, German Chancellor Angela Merkel held talks with Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, on January 18, on the possibility of stopping foreign involvement in Libya<sup>28</sup>. The UAE is one of the 12 countries with interests in maintaining the state of conflict in the area.

The Turkish President had requested, even before the conference, that the issue of negotiations be taken over by the European Union (EU) and not by a single regional power, in order to ensure the neutrality of future actions taken for reaching a peace agreement. Keeping the Libyan government in power will be “a real litmus test”<sup>29</sup> for the EU, because its disappearance would lead to Libya's transformation into a fertile area for the rebirth of terrorism, represented by Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

On 19 January, participants in the Berlin Conference on Libya pledged to respect and implement the embargo on illegal arms trafficking in the area, imposed by the UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) no. 1970 (2011), 2292 (2016) and 2473 (2019) and to support it by launching a new maritime operation in the Mediterranean Sea, comprising air, satellite and naval means. Moreover, a ceasefire agreement was reached between the parties involved, known as the “Berlin Agreement”.

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<sup>27</sup> Daria Litvinova, Vladimir Isachenkov, “Russia downplays failed Libya talks before Berlin summit”, *Associated Press*, January 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/01c02bf59d35bc26b541a42137b30355>, accessed on 30.04.2020.

<sup>28</sup> \*\*\* “Merkel, Abu Dhabi crown prince discuss Libya ahead of summit”, *Associated Press*, 18 January 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/614eb3fad9074e96e4565196201d8847>, accessed on 19.04.2020

<sup>29</sup> Andrew Wilks, “Turkey's Erdogan: Europe must back Libyan govt in Tripoli”, *Associated Press*, 18 January 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/0912ec8ea8c3ddc6baf408f188c0ebe4>, accessed on 02.05.2020.



One week later, on 23 January, top diplomats from Libya's neighbouring countries heavily influenced by the conflict, gathered in Algiers, the capital of Algeria, to discuss and intensify the international effort to end the Civil War. Countries such as Egypt, Sudan, Chad, Niger, Algeria, Tunisia and Mali<sup>30</sup> met to discuss concrete ways to prevent/reduce the maneuvers undertaken by foreign powers in Libya to gain/maintain their influence in the region, by controlling the country's oil resources. In their actions in support of one or the other party involved in the conflict, foreign powers are not shy to use jihadist mercenaries, local organised crime groups, illegal arms trafficking or even the flow of refugees to achieve their goals.

As a general conclusion, all participating states in the meeting reiterated their respect for Libya's sovereignty and integrity, called on the African Union (AU) to become more involved in extinguishing the conflict, and strengthened efforts to stop the illegal arms trade against the belligerents. It was considered that a permanent international pressure on the parties involved would lead to a temporary ceasefire truce. But no concrete political process has been agreed on further negotiations to reach a final peace agreement in the area.

#### **4. The UN Failed Tentative to Reach a Peace Agreement**

Following the Berlin Conference, the UN Council representatives rushed to establish and approve a strategy to end the Libyan Civil War. Thus, on 13 February, the British presented a resolution to this effect, condemning the recent violations of the "Berlin Agreement" by the fights continuation in the outskirts of the capital city, as well as the continuous international support given to the factions involved. The Resolution reiterated the Geneva talks on the temporary ceasefire between the belligerents, which took place one week ago and draws the attention of foreign powers to the negative impact of their involvement in the conflict. The main issue is the achievement of a permanent ceasefire truce, which could be monitored by the AU, the EU or the Arab League<sup>31</sup>.

Although the resolution was approved by 14 votes against one (Russian Federation), the temporary ceasefire was violated not only by belligerents, but also by some supporting powers, such as Turkey and Russia<sup>32</sup>. These repeated violations of the Resolution led the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and

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<sup>30</sup> Aomar Ouali, *op.cit.*

<sup>31</sup> Edith M. Leaderer, "UN Council endorses 55-point road map to end war in Libya", *Associated Press*, 13 February 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/204e9ce4abe02259d33eb8e0bf122ef5>, accessed on 20.05.2020.

<sup>32</sup> Samy Magdy, "UN envoy for Libya resigns as truce appears to crumble", *Associated Press*, 3 March 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/bda4ad27f18a30e49a969ad774ec3338>, accessed on 18.05.2020.



Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Mr. Ghassan Saleme, to resign from his post on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. This decision came as a result of the impossibility of continuing negotiations between the two belligerent parts, because of the LNA's continuous offensive to conquer Tripoli.

On 20 February, negotiations on a possible ceasefire truce were resumed by the belligerent parties in Geneva<sup>33</sup>, under UN's coordination. But, on the same day when its representatives were talking, forces led by General Khalifa Haftar bombed the port of Tripoli, halting negotiations before any results had been achieved. In response, the UN-backed Libyan government suspended the talks, claiming that the attack halted the drilling and transportation of oil and gas products of the National Petroleum Corporation, with incalculable consequences for the city's vital services. As a result, all UN-coordinated negotiations ceased until a firm position was taken to condemn the LNA actions, as well as the implication of international actors<sup>34</sup>.

In the second half of May, seven UN agencies<sup>35</sup> called on the warring parties to stop the exchange of fire in order to move the front on the fight against coronavirus, especially to protect the local population, immigrants and refugees from the area<sup>36</sup>. In their reports, those agencies found 113 cases of serious violations of the International Law, including the killing and injury of children and attacks on schools and hospitals. Thus, since the beginning of the year, at least 15 attacks have been directed at hospitals and ambulances, destroying buildings and injuring medical personnel.

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi announces possible agreement between belligerents on a temporary ceasefire, starting with 8 June<sup>37</sup>, but local militias, allied with the Libyan government, did not accept to stop the fighting, continuing to exploit the latest victories by reclaiming the airport in the capital, releasing the main entrances/exits into/from the city and conquering a series of towns near Tripoli, thus forcing General Haftar's troops to withdraw. As a result, government militias continued to fight towards the East, to the coastal town of Sirte and the small town of Tarhouna (located 72 km southeast of Tripoli), with the intention to conquer them and then seize the main oil fields from the coast. However, the new violent actions has already forced the redeployment of more than 16,000 Libyan civilians outside the two localities and, therefore, the deepening of the disastrous

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<sup>33</sup> Jamey Keaten, "Libya's warring parties resume talks in Geneva", *Associated Press*, 20 February 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/a852bdfd15ae0764ce8f2c0f380994bd>, accessed on 12.05.2020.

<sup>34</sup> Jamey Keaten, Samy Magdy, *art. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> A.N.: It's about the UN Humanitarian Agency, the UN Agency for Refugees, the World Health Organisation, UNICEF, the UN Popular Fund Agency, the World Food Program and the International Organisation for Migration.

<sup>36</sup> Edith M. Leaderer, *art. cit.*, 13 February 2020.

<sup>37</sup> Samy Magdy, "Libya's Tripoli forces press gains despite Egypt truce offer", *Associated Press*, 8 June 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/14a0671d3f9ff3d546e8edb69ab60632>, accessed on 09.06.2020.





humanitarian situation in the area<sup>38</sup>.

The resumption of negotiations between the warring parties, with a view to obtaining a temporary ceasefire armistice, is permanently supported by the UN mission in Libya, UNSMIL, which held, between 08-11 June, separate meetings with representatives of the two belligerents grouping. Unfortunately, this intent remains at the discussion stage, only, without practical consequences. The United States and Turkey have also agreed to step up their joint efforts to resolve the tensions in Libya.

### 5. The EU Implication in Sustaining the UN Embargo on Illicit Arms Trafficking in the Region

On 17 February, the EU Foreign Ministers agreed to disband the EU Maritime Operation NAVFOR Med SOPHIA, which has been taking place since 22 June 2015 in the Mediterranean, to block/reduce the access of illegal migrants from North Africa to Southern Europe. At the same time, they agreed to start another naval operation, also in the Mediterranean Sea, more focused on combating the illegal arms trafficking to Libya, which would contain air, satellite and naval means<sup>39</sup>.

Thus, on 20 March, Operation SOPHIA ceased to be off the coast of Libya,

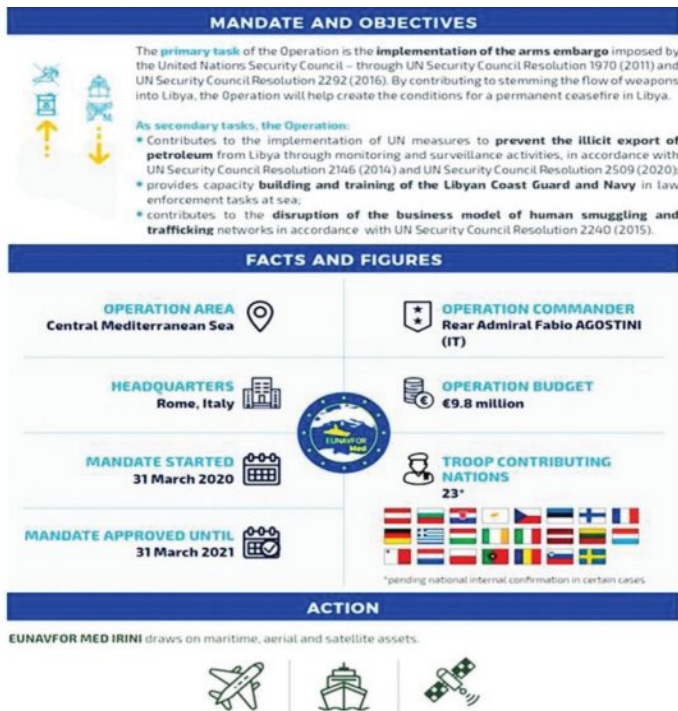


Figure no. 2: Main characteristics of the Irini EU NAVFOR Med Operation<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Samy Magdy, “UN says ‘encouraged’ by Libyan calls to resume peace talks”, *Associated Press*, 7 June 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/6554a58cbb63dab5ae0e8d2386d301>, accessed on 09.06.2020.

<sup>39</sup> Lorne Cook, “EU agrees to end Med anti-smuggler mission off Libya”, *Associated Press*, 17 February 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/219796f97fba5dc1a2c2ad29423a9ead>, accessed on 25.05.2020.

<sup>40</sup> \*\*\*, Operation Irini, URL: [www.operationirini.eu](http://www.operationirini.eu)





with the end of its term. On 27 March, EU Member States approved the launch, from 1 April 2020, of Operation CSDP EU NAVFOR Med *IRINI* (from the Greek word “peace”), with the main mandate of monitoring the UN embargo on illicit arms trafficking to Libya. The mandate is based on UN Security Council Resolution no. 2292 (2016) and will be carried out by inspecting military and commercial vessels, in international waters located about 100 km (62 nautical miles) from the east coast of Libya. The operational characteristics of the operation are provided in figure no. 2.

Assecondary tasks, Operation *IRINI* is also responsible for: monitoring and gathering information on illicit oil exports from Libya, development and training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy in carrying out law enforcement missions and collecting aerial information on illegal human trafficking networks. The first commander, Rear Admiral Fabio Agostini, was appointed and the Operations Command (OHQ) is positioned in Rome, Italy. The operation will last one year, until 31 March, 2021.

However, the EU is accused by several Member States and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)<sup>41</sup> of cooperating with the Libyan Coast Guard, while abandoning the idea of saving lives, thus violating the fundamental rights of migrants.

## 6. Implications on the North Africa Region and European Security

As diplomats from Libya’s neighbourhood stated at the Algiers meeting on 23 January, the long-running Libyan Civil War has had and continues to have negative repercussions on regional economic development and African states’ stability from the region. The Libyan conflict is also linked to the involvement of foreign powers in support of all belligerents, which has led to an increase in the number of extremist groups operating in North Africa and Sahel region and their internationalization through collaborations with local organized crime groups and international terrorist organizations, such as al Qaeda and the Islamic State.

Thus, the most affected state in the area, Egypt, which is also an indirectly involved actor in the conflict, taking part of the LNA, threatened the Libyan government with reactive actions, even military, if the Mediterranean city of Sirte or the Jufra Air Base is attacked. Being considered by the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi a “red line”<sup>42</sup>, the conquest of the two strategic objectives will force the Egyptian Armed Forces to deploy for protecting the Western border.

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<sup>41</sup> Miodrag Soric, “EU launches new Libya arms embargo mission in Mediterranean”, *Deutsche Welle*, 26 March 2020, URL: <https://www.dw.com/en/eu-launches-new-libya-arms-embargo-mission-in-mediterranean/a-52932684>, accessed on 25.05.2020.

<sup>42</sup> Samy Magdy, “Airstrikes hit Libya base held by Turkey-bacjed forces”, *Associated Press*, 5 July 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/0b877b26d9fbc2c5c0f06ae6506f3e64>, accessed on 06.07.2020.



In Algeria, a nation rich in natural gas, operates the extremist group Algerian-run Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM), a key player in the sub-Saharan region of the Sahel and fighting to maintain control of drug trafficking between the West Coast of Africa and the Mediterranean Sea. As a result of this extremist group's actions and the echoes of the Libyan Civil War, repeated pro-democracy and anti-corruption demonstrations took place in Algeria, in the second half of February 2020, to remove the newly elected President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, some of them even violent<sup>43</sup>. Same street movements took place in Egypt, – where the Muslim Brotherhood is ubiquitous, but also supports the LNA in Libya –, as well as in Morocco<sup>44</sup>. However, the scale and duration of those demonstrations were smaller and protesters behaved peacefully, although the police of the respective countries made several arrests.

Tunisia, in turn, was troubled by the appointment of a government not accepted by all political forces, as well as by some terrorist actions undertaken by the Ansar Group of Sharia-Tunis (AAS-T). After four months of long discussions and failed attempts, the Tunisian government was voted by parliament on 27 February<sup>45</sup>. But the road to economic and social transition continues to be long, and the need for an official government to meet the challenges of neighbouring Libya is urgently needed.

Moreover, the proximity to Libya and the start of the new EU maritime operation near the Libyan coast, forced immigrants from the Sahel region to rethink their options and move their efforts to cross the Mediterranean Sea towards the Southern European coast, starting from Tunisia. Thus, according to the UN Refugee Agency, illegal immigrants attempts to reach Italy from the Tunisian coast increased by 150% in the first four months of the year<sup>46</sup>, turning Tunisia into a transit country for migrants and a source of illegal immigration to Europe. Although Tunisian authorities have recently succeeded in thwarting nine attempts to smuggle people out of ten, there is still a large number of African refugees who manage to reach Italy and Greece<sup>47</sup>.

Conversely, the Algerian and Libyan authorities started to expel immigrants and refugees from the Sahel region, turning them back, through the desert, to Niger,

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<sup>43</sup> Lofti Bouchouchi, “Algeria on cusp of change as protest movement marks 1 year”, *Associated Press*, 21 February 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/65e9228c2b950ad0f795242e31cee954>, accessed on 26.05.2020.

<sup>44</sup> \*\*\*, “Maroccan rights group warns over free speech after arrests”, *Associated Press*, 9 January 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/8ce54225f7f98f66932ab2b1cd6ded59>, accessed on 27.05.2020.

<sup>45</sup> Bouazza Ben Bouazza, “Tunisia approves government after months of deadlock”, *Associated Press*, 27 February 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/1d8e4be6655d305c358ecaf4a89a3bc9>, accessed on 22.05.2020.

<sup>46</sup> \*\*\*, “Tunisia recovers the bodies of 20 migrants after shipwreck”, *Associated Press*, 9 June 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/391c5b73c714384e8ebc4a4337ce7e72>, accessed on 09.06.2020.

<sup>47</sup> \*\*\*, “Migrant schpwreks off Tunisia leave 1 dead, over 80 rescued”, *Associated Press*, 24 May 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/9d78ffa96e21f12838781bae6bd87990>, accessed on 27.05.2020.



Sudan and Chad. Thus, the UN International Organization for Migration announced, in early May, that more than 2,300 immigrants are trapped in Niger and unable to return home<sup>48</sup>. The pandemic and hostile actions in Libya may force North African immigrants and refugees to choose between drowning at sea or dying of thirst in the desert, at 50° Celsius. Neither the Egyptians nor the Tunisians want to take back their compatriots from Libya, due to the lack of official documents and the danger of spreading the new coronavirus.

The intervention of European powers, on both sides of the warring parties, has also a negative side on Europe's security, especially by increasing illegal arms trafficking to North Africa, maintaining illegal human trafficking and increasing drug trafficking to the Southern European coast. Moreover, the recent politico-military dispute between France and Turkey over the naval incident of 10 June 2020<sup>49</sup>, when military clashes between the two countries' warships broke out of the Libyan coast, it demonstrated and continues to demonstrate the limitations of the North Atlantic Alliance if some Allies are involved in supporting different parts of the same conflict, and NATO's weaknesses as a politico-military organization whose decisions are taken by consensus<sup>50</sup>.

Disagreements, at the EU level, between Member States with strategic interests in the area, especially Italy and France, but also the permanent involvement of Russia and Turkey in Libya, on antagonistic positions, lead to exacerbation of the conflict and the impossibility of finding a viable international solution.

### Conclusions

The Libyan Civil War, which has begun in 2011 and intensified in 2019, does not seem to have a chance to be resolved. The involvement of foreign powers, on each side of the warlike parties, has already given it a proxy warfare characteristic, being also amplified by organized crime, extremist/terrorist groups, illegal arms trafficking and immigrants' flow. If the current UN-recognized Libyan government seeks to restore normality in the country and take control of all Libyan territories, the same goal is pursued by

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<sup>48</sup> Lori Hinnant, Isabel Debre, "Desert or sea: Virus traps migrants in mid-route danger zone", *Associated Press*, 3 May 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/8e03a003aaa32fa2cac91929c70a1b22>, accessed on 29.05.2020.

<sup>49</sup> A.N.: On June 10, 2020, the French Corvette Courbet, being in an Intel mission to collect information for the NATO-led Operation "Sea Guardian", was 'illuminated' by a Turkish Warship's radar, which escorted a Tanzanian cargo-ship. The incident had a huge politico-military impact by forcing France to withdraw from the Allied countries participating at the Operation until the NATO member states will not respect the UN embargo.

<sup>50</sup> Lorne Cook, "France-Turkey spat over Libya arms exposes NATO's limits", *Associated Press*, 5 July 2020, URL: <https://apnews.com/045a9b8eb0f7eb5adc33d1303fafa95d>, accessed on 06.07.2020



General Khalifa Haftar, the LNA commander. But, each pursues his goal in different ways, without taking into consideration the involvement of local population and foreign fighters in this endless conflict. None of them is also considering the fact that the country, once very rich in oil, is on the edge of bankruptcy.

In turn, extremist groups have their own goal to fulfill, fighting on one side or the other – to maintain control over the illegal trafficking of weapons, people and drugs. Their connection with international terrorist organizations, such as Al Qaeda and the Islamic State, gives them a dreaded character and an amplifying factor in the disastrous situation of the area. International and regional security organizations are desperately trying to bring all belligerents to the negotiating table, but their efforts are unsuccessful and less effective. Firstly, because each belligerent is officially sponsored and supported by several local and regional powers. Secondly, some of these foreign powers are members of the UN Security Council, the EU Council or the African Union/Arab League, which prevents the adaptation of joint efficient decisions against belligerents' actions and for stopping illegal arms, military materials and mercenaries' exports, towards Libya.

The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in North Africa and the Sahel region further exacerbated the regional disaster. Instead of halting all actions of the warlike parties and bringing them to the negotiation table for a ceasefire truce, it had a reverse effect – the reduction of humanitarian activities and the number of personnel involved, including the military, for international and regional security organizations operating in the area, as well as of foreign military missions in Africa.

The end of EU Operation NAVFOR Med *SOPHIA* to combat illegal migration from the Libyan coast to Southern Europe and the start of a new one, *IRINI*, to monitor illegal arms trafficking towards the Libyan coast and impose the embargo set by the UN Security Council, did not bring with itself an improvement of the situation in the region, nor the successful implementation of a peace agreement.

As a result, the security situation in North Africa continues to deteriorate, being exacerbated by the worsening of humanitarian conditions for local population and the continuing increase of immigrants' flows and terrorist acts in the area. This will significantly and negatively affect Europe's security by increasing illegal arms trafficking to North Africa, maintaining illegal human trafficking and increasing drug trafficking to the Southern coast of Europe.

Unless something important is done to put an end to the conflict and improve the situation in Libya, the positive achievements of the “Arab Spring” on ousting dictators from North African states will turn into a “Salafist Winter”, in which Islamic Caliphates and Emirates will emerge, led by non-state actors, such as extremist groups Al Qaeda and the Islamic State.

# MANAGING THE CHALLENGES AND EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Dr. Beatrice Mahler, Manager of the “Marius Nasta” National Institute of Pneumoftiziologie, Bucharest, Romania

❶ **Strategic Impact (SI):** *Dear Dr. Beatrice Mahler, you are a manager and a doctor at the “Marius Nasta” National Institute of Pneumoftiziologie in Bucharest, one of the public health institutions at the forefront of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, you have a double role: participant in the process of effective crisis management and specialist who provides medical care, who is in contact with each patient infected with the new coronavirus. From this complex perspective, how do you see the current situation around the world?*

**Dr. Beatrice Mahler (BM):** The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic represents a real challenge for every state in the world and, implicitly, for the health systems that are put to the test – we are referring to a strong impact on the public health, the economy, the social, security and political levels, so we are talking about a condition that impacts society in general and at all levels. It is a time to reorganize the priorities of each state, because the state itself can not exist without its citizens, therefore, 2020 has focused, globally, on the health of the citizen from the perspective of public health.

❷ **SI:** *What about Romania’s situation ?*

**BM:** In Romania, the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic brought the urgent need for the optimal configuration of the health system in order to respond as promptly as possible to the public health threat. For the first time in many years, we started to use together two words that represent two concepts: health and security. There was organized the meeting of the Supreme Defence





Council of the Country, on the coronavirus pandemic, and in the period that followed, we all saw how the COVID-19 pandemic interferes with our lives as individuals and with all levels of society. We had military ordinances, it was declared, first, state of emergency, then state of alert, we witness the fact that even the legislative process must respond to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. And yes, Romania, like other countries, has had to make and continues to make efforts to respond to the challenges of the pandemic.

- ③ **SI:** *What is your viewpoint in terms of inter-institutional cooperation at central and local level in the fight against the pandemic and the efforts made to limit the spread of the virus?*

**BM:** Everywhere, of course, things can be improved, but as we have seen from the information in the public space and internationally, there have been challenges. As we already know, the health system in Romania is fragile, much less equipped compared to many European countries, which during this period has acutely highlighted the shortage in terms of staff, particularly specialists in epidemiology, ICU (e.n. Intensive Care Unit), infectious diseases, pneumology, public health and family medicine. We have to learn from what was not good, in order to do well in the future, we have some good examples in some situations, but efforts must be continued.

- ④ **SI:** *Given the role that arises from being the manager of the Institute, can you tell us how prepared to respond was the public health system at the beginning of the health crisis? Did we learn anything from this situation?*

**BM:** At the beginning of the crisis, things were more complicated, the Romanian sanitary system was in dire need of equipment, purchasing of sanitary materials, but this scenario was also seen in other states, because each country tried to secure sufficient equipment for its citizens. We have now stepped into another stage in the evolution of the pandemic, that is community transmission, where every citizen's involvement and collaboration are needed. From this moment, the health system will be subjected to an endurance test, which is maximal, if we refer to specialties, such as infectious diseases, epidemiology, pneumology, ICU, family medicine, both from the perspective of funding and from the perspective of staff shortage, where change can not be made quickly, requiring long-term projects supported by health policies. What we learn from this experience is that we must be flexible, responsible and involved to find solutions to every situation we are dealing with, we are yet at the beginning, if we refer to the COVID-19 pandemic.





- ⑤ *SI: What do you think are the short and medium term prospects of the public health system in Romania? After the end of the health crisis, do you consider it necessary and is there a time frame to start its reform?*

**BM:** The subject of health reform has been brought into discussion every year since the revolution, steps have been taken, we must not forget that reform means allocating funds, we must look at how much of the GDP we allocate for health and from here to start the discussion about a new perspective on the health system. We also need to learn from the crises of recent years, and I would only mention here two: the Colectiv case and the fight against nosocomial infections, but also what we are currently experiencing.

- ⑥ *SI: Given the specific of the Strategic Impact journal, allow us to focus the discussion on the area of national and international security. It is obvious that the current health crisis has profound repercussions on the global security environment, but from your perspective, what do you think are the areas of national security most severely affected by this crisis?*

**BM:** In terms of national security, when we talk about the pandemic, we refer to security issues, and Romania must pass over this crisis as well as possible, on all levels, from the health system to the economic system, from the individual to society as a whole. In general, health deterioration has a major impact in all areas, especially since we are talking about a new virus, whose pathogenesis we are gradually discovering, with an extremely high rate of contagion and an unpredictable evolution, which does not take into account age and, in most cases, neither comorbidities. Therefore, the state, through its institutions, must ensure and implement both public health policies that best respond to the challenges of the pandemic, as well as provide financial resources and support, from logistical to expert consultancy, and an organized communication framework to all institutions involved in the pandemic management. But, as I already stated, the most efficient management of the pandemic depends, first of all, on the state institutions but also on each of us, as individuals. During this crisis, we have witnessed how important it is to have an industry that adapts rapidly to the existing situation: first, there was the medical equipment rush for the protection of healthcare professionals, later we saw that many sectors and/or companies have adapted, have processed the need and began producing protection equipment. Perhaps now, more than ever, to give just one example, we have seen or understood or, at least, we should understand, the strategic role that the Cantacuzino Institute, as well as the Institute for Public Health must play. We need these institutions when it comes to health and safety.



- 7 **SI:** *What can you tell us about society's reaction to the measures imposed by the authorities to manage this crisis? Do you think it is necessary to strengthen health education, but also the security culture of the population so that the internalization of new rules, specific to the management of such an exceptional situation, becomes easier?*

**BM:** Certainly, coherent measures in disease prevention can be taken only if we constantly have in mind the objective of health education, a population that understands the need for medical measures, so that the need to comply with the rules comes naturally, secondary to an education through which to lay the foundations of the main medical phenomena. Health education must be an ongoing process, addressed to different age groups, tackling with ways of communication adapted to different population categories. Health education, during this period, creates in the long run the necessary foundation to consolidate some directions that contribute to the increase of the degree of national security.

- 8 **SI:** *Please accept the translation of this discussion on a personal level and reveal to us what does the fight against the pandemic generated by the new coronavirus mean to you. Are there viable solutions to mitigate/eradicate it?*

**BM:** Because you ask how I look at the pandemic, from a personal standpoint, my answer would be “with certain personal measures”. The pandemic has meant increasing responsibility. I am responsible for my own health, but working in a COVID-19 hospital, I am also responsible for the health of those around me, so, in order for the pandemic to be kept under control each and one of us has their share of responsibility.

- 9 **SI:** *In the end, we would like to thank you for the careful analysis of the most important aspects of the fight against the virus, and we kindly ask you to send a message to the readers of Strategic Impact journal. .*

**BM:** Your journal has a suggestive name, Strategic Impact. Also, COVID-19 and what we learn from this pandemic must have an impact in the future, and if we do our homework well, the impact will be strategic, meaning that we are talking about coherence and strategy in terms of decisions, and when we are referring to health, I believe that the strategic approach of the field is a priority. How much money can we invest? What resources do we have? What can we do today? What could be done tomorrow? What answers will we have in the future? In the end, I wish you good health, to be negative at COVID-19, in a future that we hope to be positive.

*Translation from Romanian language: Andreea Tudor, Centre  
for Defence and Security Strategic Studies,  
“Carol I” National Defence University, Bucharest, Romania.*



# GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

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✓ **Originality** of the paper – own argumentation; novelty character – not priorly published;

✓ **Quality of the scientific content** – neutral, objective style, argumentation of statements and mentioning of all references used;

✓ **A relevant bibliography**, comprising recent and prestigious specialized works, including books, presented according to herein model;

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✓ A relevant **abstract**, not to exceed 150 words (italic characters)

✓ 6-8 relevant **keywords** (italic characters)

✓ **Introduction / preliminary considerations**

✓ **2 - 4 chapters** (numbered, starting with 1) (subchapters if applicable)

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It is academic common knowledge that in the Abstract and Conclusions there shall not be inserted any references.

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