

THE EURO - ATLANTIC STRUCTURES AND ROMANIA

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NATO Enlargement

The enlargement of Euro - Atlantic and European interlocking institutions, comprising the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the European Union (EU) and the Western European Union (WEU) is a very complex undertaking due to the inherent need for internal reformation of these structures so as to respond to new challenges. To this adds the new dimension of their relationship making them even more complementary and the adverse effects the enlargement as such might have on countries like Russia or Ukraine, which will not be part of the Western security structures in the foreseeable future.

The NATO enlargement, a coherent and necessary process for ensuring the stability in an undivided Europe, started with the three strongest candidates, capable of fulfilling the membership criteria. The document issued by the NATO Heads of State and Government, during the meeting in Madrid, on 8 - 9 July 1997, confirmed this trend and invited only the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to begin accession talks with NATO¹. The best explanation to this outcome was given by British Prime Minister, Tony Blair: „(...) This is a big expansion of NATO. This is a military guarantee that we are giving to these countries that come into NATO. Particularly, if you have got fighting forces as professional and of such quality as ours you have to be very careful in giving these

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military guarantees (...) We welcome the strides that have been made by other countries like Romania and Slovenia, the great advances that they have made, we welcome that, but we have got to make sure that NATO remains a strong defence security for us. It has got to remain strong and that is important not just for us but for any country that may join in the future"².

The document, titled „Madrid declaration on Euro - Atlantic Security and Cooperation", despite reiterating the NATO „open door" policy, made no reference to a new round of enlargement and refrained from making nominations for it. Yet, some excluded candidate countries were mentioned in the Declaration, due to political reasons, but only to commend their efforts towards democracy and without any guarantees that they would join the Alliance in the future³. The fact that the document made reference to the „review" of the process of NATO enlargement at the „next meeting in 1999" fuelled the expectations of the candidate countries mentioned in paragraph 8 towards a possible nomination for integration with NATO at this early date.

These speculations triggered reactions from the NATO leading members. Marc Grossman, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, specified before the US Congress, in October 1997: „We have been clear with everyone that the United States has not decided there should be a second round of NATO enlargement and is not in the business of pre - designating candidates. We wish to be misunderstood by no one"⁴. Madeleine Albright, US Secretary of State, reiterated this position in December 1997 when she addressed the North Atlantic Council: „We should all avoid making specific commitments to specific countries; there is no need to raise expectations by playing favorites, or to assume that our parliaments will always agree"⁵.

Moreover, Madeleine Albright insisted on the real value of the possibility of having a new NATO enlargement in 1999, as assessed at the moment of her declaration: „At this point, saying <<maybe>> to another round is not much better than saying <<no>>⁶. The most clear - cut

assessment of what can be achieved in 1999 was given by the British Defence Secretary, George Robertson: „So there is little point in speculating now when further accessions might take place or which countries might be involved. The key priority now is to ensure that this round of enlargement succeeds. Until we know from experience that it has, we cannot responsibly take decisions about the timing, still less the composition, of any further rounds. We should be very cautious about what we can achieve by 1999"⁷.

The US Senate approved the expansion of NATO to include Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic on 30 April 1998 (the vote was 80 to 19, more than the two - thirds majority required for ratification of the Protocols). Most interesting is the fact the Senate, voting 59 to 41, rejected an amendment by Senator John W. Warner, imposing a three - year moratorium on further NATO enlargement. Despite the rejection of the amendment, this outcome very clearly indicates that there is no two - thirds majority in the US Senate for another round of enlargement to be settled in the following three years. It is very hard to believe that the US Administration would embark upon a new expansion in 1999 without considering the present stand of the Senate on this issue. On the other hand, ambassador Alexander Vershbow, US permanent representative on the North Atlantic Council, referring to the reaction of the US Senate, highlighted, just before the Senate's decision, that „it will be more difficult to sell future candidates than the first three"⁸. He mentioned NATO would review the whole process of enlargement at the 1999 summit, but underlined that this „doesn't necessarily mean there'll be another round of invitations. It's a possibility, or there could be a decision to wait a little bit longer"⁹.

All these evolutions within NATO indicate that 1999 will not bring new developments regarding the enlargement process. The „review" in Washington will extend no clear date for a new round nor other nominations for it.

Transformation and Enlargement

So, the first challenge to be addressed in the new international political environment is adjusting the machinery of the European institutions to a changed pattern of collaboration with the American allies and building up an European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within NATO. This seems to be a sound basis for European initiatives in the field of peacekeeping or humanitarian operations (the so - called Petersberg operations) against the background of crises proliferation on the European continent and the ever growing reluctance of the Americans to get involved in what they consider to be strictly European affairs. Of course, ESDI is not aimed at duplicating NATO, the responsibilities of collective defence under the Treaty of Washington still laying with the Atlantic Alliance.

Title V of the Treaty of Maastricht (the Common Foreign and Security Policy - CFSP) establishes a formal link (not very well defined in the Treaty between the European Union and the Western European Union, the latter being envisaged as part of the development of EU: „The Union requests the Western European Union (WEU) which is an integral part of the development of the Union, to elaborate and implement decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications" (Art. J. 4.2).

Moreover, the Declaration on Western European Union annexed to the Treaty stipulates in paragraph 1: „WEU Member States agree on the need to develop a genuine European Security and defence identity and a greater European responsibility on defence matters. This identity will be pursued through a gradual process of involving successive phases. WEU will form an integral part of the process of the development of the European Union and will enhance its contribution to solidarity within the Atlantic Alliance. WEU Member States agree to strengthen the role of WEU, in the longer term perspective of a common defence policy within the European Union which might in time lead to a common defence, compatible with that of the Atlantic Alliance". What is most important, in terms of political integration, is the fact that the

Declaration provides for WEU membership for EU member states if they are willing to integrate with WEU: „States which are members of the European Union are invited to accede to WEU on conditions to be agreed in accordance with Article XI of the modified Brussels Treaty¹⁰, or to become observers if they so wish".

Bearing in mind that all WEU member states are also NATO members and in a close collective defence relationship with the USA through the Treaty of Washington, it is evident that by entering the EU and, afterwards WEU, a state could enter a security relationship with the USA without being a NATO member. That is simply because it enters a security relationship with countries (WEU member states) which are connected to the collective defence system of the USA through the Treaty of Washington that governs NATO. Moreover, the modified Brussels Treaty that governs WEU establishes a juridical link between WEU and NATO through which it is clearly understood that the collective defence of WEU member states is NATO's duty and would not be duplicated by any prerogatives or self - assumed new missions by WEU under the Treaty¹¹. The military aspects of this formal relationship were regulated by Protocol No. II on Forces of Western European Union, signed in Paris on 23 October 1954 and entered into force on 6 May 1955.

Such a reality is acknowledged by American security experts who are pointing out that: „Some US State and Defense officials express the additional concern that EU expansion, proceeding without a decision to enlarge NATO carries with it a <<back - door>> US involvement in the security of Central European states. They do not necessarily oppose EU expansion but believe that it should take place after a decision is made whether to enlarge NATO. In this view, a conflict between a new EU member from Central Europe and a neighboring state such as Serbia or Romania would quickly involve current EU (and NATO) states such as Germany, France or Italy (...) The United States might then have an obligation under the North Atlantic Treaty to come to the

assistance of one of its NATO allies drawn into such a conflict"¹². It is very interesting to note that Serbia and Romania (which nevertheless signed an Association Agreement with EU) were portrayed as potential enemies of some would-be NATO members.

The „Study on NATO Enlargement“, issued by the Alliance, pays tribute to the relationship between NATO enlargement and that of the EU and makes the following view very clear: „The enlargement of NATO is a parallel process with and will complement that of the European Union (...) The Alliance views its own enlargement and that of the EU as mutually supportive and parallel processes which together will make a significant contribution to strengthening Europe's security structure. Thus, each organisation should ensure that their respective processes are in fact mutually supportive of the goal of enhancing European stability and security. While no rigid parallelism is foreseen, each organisation will need to consider developments in the other“¹³.

The European Commission extended the same view in Agenda 2000: „Although autonomous processes, there are important links between EU and NATO enlargement, particularly as the June 1996 NATO ministerial meeting in Berlin agreed on the establishment of an European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within the framework of the Atlantic Alliance. The progressive development of a common defence policy of the Union will also be affected by enlargement since the security interests and requirements of an enlarged EU will be more complex and heterogeneous. At the July 1997 summit in Madrid, NATO agreed to invite three countries to open negotiations, and also agreed new measures to deepen co-operation with other partner countries. The summit also made clear that there

Which Article V?

On the other hand, what is still insufficiently understood in countries such as Romania, for example (which is campaigning resolutely for NATO membership seen as a miraculous security panacea), is the fact that article V of the modified Brussels Treaty

would be future enlargement negotiations with other partner countries. This means that the issue of congruence in membership of the EU, Western European Union (WEU) and NATO remains an open and delicate question, the outcome of which may also affect the objective of integrating the WEU into the EU“¹⁴.

Every European country, which is a candidate for NATO membership, can join the Alliance through an integration, in the first stage, into EU. Klaus Kinkel, the German Foreign Minister, firmly laid emphasis on the idea that EU enlargement has priority and not that of NATO, the two enlargements being nevertheless parallel processes¹⁵. The assessment of the conditions to be fulfilled in order to integrate with NATO indicate a possible solution in taking the following road: EU - WEU - NATO. This idea of the so-called „Royal Road“ was presented by the German Defence Minister Volker Ruhe as early as 21 May 1993 when he informed the Defence and Security Committee of the North Atlantic Assembly in Berlin: „With their forthcoming association with the European Communities, the political foundations have been laid (for EU and WEU membership) and for the Visegrad states - Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. I therefore see no reason in principle for denying future members of the European Union membership of NATO“¹⁶.

This applies to all European countries having signed an Association Agreement with EU and having good prospects of becoming EU members. So, there is a strong link between the enlargement of NATO and that of EU. We can add to this the process of building up a new ESDI with a WEU becoming more operational as part of the development of EU and as a European pillar of NATO.

governing WEU offers much stronger security guarantees than article V of the Treaty of Washington governing NATO¹⁷. It is true that WEU has no such operational military capabilities as NATO has. But WEU has no need for them. WEU member states are protected by

the strong security guarantees agreed among the allies through the modified Brussels Treaty. For example, had Romania been entered a security relationship with Britain, through the modified Brussels Treaty, what would have been the significance of WEU having or not having operational capabilities given that Britain would have been compelled by the Treaty to support Romania with all its military strength in case of need? Moreover, why would WEU need military operational capabilities to protect its members since their collective defence is NATO's duty and the North Atlantic Alliance has all the capabilities to fulfil this task?

Even if, at first sight, seeking WEU membership does not seem to be as valuable as seeking NATO membership because WEU is considered to be a „soft" organisation, in security terms, the WEU option might prove itself at least as valuable as the NATO option given that the two organisations are not contradictory but supportive ones.

Of course, the integration into EU appears, at first sight, as being a much more complicated process than that of acceding to NATO because of the economic and legislative record. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom had to wait for 13 years before its accession to EC for political reasons while the same political reasons decisively prompted Greece's integration into EC. The countries which aim at becoming EU members have to accelerate the process of economic and legislative accommodation, but have to be aware of the fact that there are even today EU member countries which are not totally compatible with the Community's economic and legislative standards, not to mention the

A Romanian policy towards NATO

The intricate interplay between Western and Russian interests in Central Europe makes a very shaky contribution to the edification of a new European security architecture and affects in a major way the processes of both, NATO and EU enlargement and even the transformation of these organisations. Caught between these rather divergent trends Romania, a country very close geographically to Russia, has to cope with the

Maastricht criteria. Therefore, a proper balance between economic and political rapprochement is to be struck. Moreover, before effectively expanding Eastward, the EU has to reform its own institutions which will considerably delay the enlargement as such. But even so, the associate countries have to find a way to adhere to the CFSP and ESDI without being EU or WEU members because this adherence would not be encumbered by the economic and legislative record (of course, after the EU member states reach an agreement regarding CFSP and the new relationship between EU and WEU).

According to the Treaty of Maastricht every new member of EU has the possibility to become a WEU member. But the modified Treaty of Brussels which governs WEU and the Treaty of Washington that governs NATO provide, through their Articles V which are linked together, collective defence guarantees for the members of the two organisations, all WEU members being NATO members. Any new WEU member can, thus, benefit from a security relationship with the USA and NATO (even if not formally expressed) simply by entering WEU, without being a NATO member. In this context, WEU took the decision to develop an operational capability which would not duplicate NATO structures and was not aimed at assuming collective defence tasks (see developments within WEU: Eurocorps, or the process of implementation of the concept *Combined Joint Task Forces - CJTF* agreed at the NATO summit in Brussels, in January 1994, through which NATO accepts that its assets be used by WEU for Petersberg operations: peacekeeping, humanitarian operations etc.).

Russian opposition to accept NATO military infrastructure near its border and with Western tendency of accepting the Russian stand. Therefore, the political ruling circles in Romania are under constant pressure in taking major decisions on the delicate issue of integration trying to make the Romanian people's desire to integrate into the Western family of nations seem as less threatening to Russian interests as possible.

If in the case of EU enlargement, for the time being, the Russians have no objections, in the case of NATO, which remains essentially a military alliance and a system of collective defence, the Romanian Government finds great difficulties in explaining to the Russian counterpart the necessity for Romania to integrate into a structure which still embodies the very rationale which stood behind its setting up: defence of the Western world against any Russian attempt to aggression. To this adds the special conditions of economic reform in Romania which was slower than in the Visegrad countries and some serious inconsistencies in the former democratic governance like the association to the government (before 1996 general elections) of radical nationalistic forces represented by Gheorghe Funar's Party (the Party of Romanian National Unity - Romanian acronym: PUNR)¹⁸, realities which encumbered the West to perceive in a sound positive way Romanian's readiness to adopt the Western pattern of democratic development.

Some Western officials contributed to increase the Romanians' resentfulness by expressing their plans to support the enlargement of Euro - Atlantic structures to encompass only the Visegrad countries. This stand is understandable and totally connected to the image created through the institutionalisation of Europe, which became a family of like - minded countries. Unfortunately, Romania is not regarded in the West as a like - minded country, despite its genuine efforts to create the basis for being accepted as such. This situation triggered the reverse, putting the Romanian officials in the awkward position of expressing their major natural interest in integration, but being at the same time extremely cautious not to arise Russian suspicions and voicing in a louder tone than necessary intentions to keep alive the Romanian - Russian friendly relationship.

As a matter of fact this relationship is required by NATO as a prerequisite of integration, because NATO is not integrating countries which have unsolved problems left with Russia. But Romanian carefulness about the Russian position was a little bit exceeding what NATO officials were able to accept and affected

the Romania's image as a like - minded country. Some mixed and confused messages the political ruling class and Government officials in Romania sent to NATO contributed to a poor assessment in the West of the Romanian credibility in terms of political commitment to the Atlantic Alliance. Despite the enthusiastic adherence of the Romanian people to the idea of their country becoming part of NATO and the practical steps taken by the whole Romanian society to make integration possible, some official political stands shed a peculiar light on Romania - NATO relationship.

In this vein, there were some evaluations within the Romanian political circles, which did not really match the definition of political credibility required by a true partnership with the West. There is a hot debate in Romania about the so - called discrimination made by some Western officials between the candidates to integration favouring the Visegrad countries. But when dealing with the responsibilities implied by the quality of NATO membership for example, which include the acceptance in principle of the deployment of nuclear weapons and NATO forces on the member countries' soil, the Romanian parliamentary delegation to the North Atlantic Assembly conveyed a wrong message to the Euro - Atlantic community when it opposed such a deployment in November 1994.

Obviously, such a deployment on the territory of a new member country is hardly likely, due to Russian opposition and severe military budgetary cuts in NATO member states, but this does not preclude a would - be member country to accept the full responsibilities, at least in principle, as deriving from the quality of full fledged NATO member. The Rapporteur Karsten Voigt was bitterly emphasising in November 1994: „Whereas the leader of the Romanian delegation (who was Ion Rațiu, prominent member of the most influential opposition - at that time - party in Romania, the Christian Democratic National Peasants Party - author's note) writes in very general terms on conditions of full membership, he is specific and adamant with respect to non - deployment of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons on Romanian soil in peacetime. By contrast, the Polish, Hungarian and Czech responses are more categoric

with respect to being integrated 'as fully as possible' in all Alliance political and military structures"¹⁹. It seems that the Romanian delegation contributed a lot to the process of differentiating among the candidates to integration.

The positions expressed by the Visegrad countries parliamentary delegations at the NAA were endorsed by the presidents of those countries: Polish President Lech Walesa publicly supported the idea presented by his Government's Defence Minister Zbigniew Okonski, in Brussels, in September 1995, according to which Poland had no objection to NATO conventional forces or nuclear weapons deployment on its soil, after integration into the Alliance²⁰. The Czech Republic's President Vaclav Havel declared at about the same time that his country was ready to accept NATO nuclear weapons on its soil after integration even if this seemed to be highly unlikely and he added: „In political terms, I think that being a NATO member means not only willing to get a security umbrella but also to undertake some obligations"²¹.

Compared to these statements, the position of the Romanian delegation to NAA seemed to be outdated and parochial, in any case not a very good propaganda for convincing NATO about the Romanian readiness to become a reliable ally. This stand was all the more regrettable since it was not included in the confidential documents Romania prepared in March 1996, to initiate the individual dialogue with NATO on the issue of enlargement which provided for a very flexible position and accepted, subject to consultations, NATO nuclear weapons and forces on Romanian soil. So, Romania accepts even the deployment of NATO troops and nuclear weaponry, which is very positive for a sound partnership with NATO in the perspective of integration, even if NATO is not intending to proceed in that sense (as underlined in the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Co-operation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation of 27 May 1997) which is very probable, but this position comes after tribulations and confused public messages which undermined Romanian political credibility.

To this adds the unfortunate remarks of high ranking Romanian military officials like

Defence Minister Gheorghe Tinca who declared in March 1996 in a press conference that „Romania's non-integration into NATO is not the end of the world"²², which is indeed a very realistic philosophical image of the world, but at the same time a very bad policy of supporting Romanian efforts towards integration²³. Not to mention the evaluations of Minister Tinca concerning the consecutive integration into NATO of Central European countries (provided for in fact by the „NATO Enlargement Study") which would result, by his opinion, in an „armaments race" between Hungary and Romania if the former were accepted before the latter into the Alliance²⁴.

So, one could easily imagine that Minister Tinca was referring to an armaments race between Romania and NATO if the enlargement were consecutive (Hungary being part of NATO in that case and Romania following at a later stage) and not simultaneous, which is unbelievable. Even more confusing were the assertions of Chief of Staff Dumitru Cioflina who declared in April 1996 that if the outcome of presidential elections in Russia indicated a communist victory, Romania and other countries in the region, including countries from the ex-USSR area, could conclude an extra-NATO alliance to better protect themselves from developments in Russia²⁵. These declarations triggered the reaction of President Ion Iliescu through the President's spokesman who reiterated the firm will of the Romanian Government and people to integrate into the Western security structures and not in any other regional alliance²⁶. But these statements of high ranking military officials were all the more puzzling since they came in an international regional context with significant consequences for Romanian capability to fulfil the requirements of admission into NATO, one of them being the conclusion of bilateral treaties with Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova. Romania failed to conclude the treaties with Russia and Moldova facing a new serious handicap on the path towards integration and deepening the confusion in the West about its intentions.

President Emil Constantinescu (leader of the Democratic Convention), elected in 1996,

very firmly committed himself to the cause of Romanian Euro-Atlantic integration. The November 1996 general and presidential elections validated the victory of a coalition including the Democratic Convention of Romania, the Social Democratic Union and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania. This outcome prompted the process of economic and institutional reform, highlighted the potential for a better understanding of minorities rights and needs (the representatives of the Hungarian minority have got important positions in the government including ministerial ones) and consolidated the political orientation toward the West and Western interlocking institutions. President Constantinescu was probably the most important advocate of this new trend, which consolidated his political standing before a pro-Western population favouring the integration of Romania with NATO and EU by a large majority. He succeeded in concluding a treaty with Ukraine without references to historical feuds very much invoked by the opponents to the treaty in Romania, which was a major step ahead on the path of Euro-Atlantic integration.

As far back as 4 February 1997, president Constantinescu addressed the North Atlantic Council in Brussels underlining „the firm option of the Romanian people to integrate into the Euro-Atlantic structures, as soon as the gates of the Organisation open to receive new Member States”²⁷. Yet, the campaign for the first wave of NATO enlargement, initiated by president Constantinescu lacked substance and

The „strategy” for Madrid

On the other hand, the most important document stating the strategies and the arguments of Romania's integration with NATO was the *White Book on Romania and NATO*, issued by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1997. This document, elaborated before the summit in Madrid, reiterated the well known arguments of the Romanian campaign for NATO: a firm and natural option, the political and popular support for integration, Romania being a pillar of stability for NATO, Romania being a stability builder in Central Europe and a

overemphasised arguments such as Romania's geostrategic position, Romania being a pillar of stability in the region or the necessity for Romania to get integrated with NATO as a matter of dignity. Despite this diplomatic offensive, president Constantinescu failed to spur the negotiations with Moldova and Russia for concluding the bilateral treaties, which brought an additional burden in the course for NATO integration. The economic situation of the country did not improve and the reform was delayed due to political considerations related to the social costs of the transformation process.

Moreover, president Constantinescu constantly exhibited his personal relationship with president Chirac of France, as a supreme argument for Romania's integration into NATO, turning the French support into the most important tool of the Romanian campaign for the Alliance. Less attention was paid to the relationship with USA while the relations with Germany and especially United Kingdom were almost totally neglected in connection to NATO enlargement. President Constantinescu was convinced that this policy would bring Romania into NATO in the first wave of enlargement. He pointed out in February 1997 that „building up a NATO without Poland or Romania is senseless”²⁸. And he added: „I think that, eventually, Germany will support Romania, not only to line up with French position, but also to address the strategic analysis motivation, because a NATO without Poland or Romania is senseless”²⁹.

consensus builder in Southeast Europe, Romania being a solvent and expanding NATO market, Romania meeting the security deficit for the Southern flank and Romania bringing a significant addition to the collective defence capability of NATO.

The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' officials mounted a campaign for NATO integration laying emphasis on the idea that the Alliance had to accept Romania as a member even in the first round of enlargement since otherwise Romania would be left to nationalist

disorder and major political disturbances which could jeopardise the stability of the whole area and impair the Romanian-Hungarian relationship: „If only one of them (this is Hungary or Romania - author's note) is able to see her aspirations fulfilled, there is no doubt that the other would feel frustrated, with a negative impact on the domestic political scene. If this happens, the process of rapprochement and partnership-building between Romania and Hungary could be slowed down, if not compromised altogether. The impact on all the political leaders who worked hard to accomplish a major breakthrough in the Romanian-Hungarian relations could be serious, even devastating. Thus, the ground would be prepared for those nationalistic and extremist politicians who opposed all along the development of normal partnership relations between Romania and Hungary to acquire renewed credibility and audience with the implicit risk of weakening internal stability”³⁰.

Such an argumentation based on a blackmail strategy only shed a thick shadow on the capability of Romania to provide really the kind of security NATO was a model of. Consequently it had a reversed effect narrowing Romania's chances of demonstrating its reliability. William Drozdiak of *Washington Post* very well summarised this perception: „Romania's supporters say a rejection of its candidacy would be so disappointing after such immense preparations that it could arouse a nationalist backlash. But US officials and other skeptics say this kind of threat only reflects the superficial quality of Romania's bid and the country's inherent political instability”³¹. On the other hand, paradoxically enough, the very strategy of demonstrating the necessity of enlarging NATO, as envisaged by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was used by the opponents to enlargement in USA as a very strong argument against NATO expansion. Thus, the British American Security Information Council (BASIC) opposed NATO enlargement using as an argument the adverse consequences for the regional stability of including one country and leaving aside the other.

The BASIC's bulk of argumentation resided, among others, in the *White Book on Romania and NATO* issued in Bucharest, the paragraphs related to the Romanian-Hungarian

relationship: „Exclusion from NATO, however, could unravel the positive developments in relations between those countries. These treaties will be under threat from the nationalist forces that will be strengthened in the excluded countries. A recently released <<White Book>> by the Romanian Foreign Office provides a chilling picture of the future and warns that: « If only one of them [Hungary, Romania] is able to see her aspirations fulfilled, there is no doubt that the other would feel frustrated, with a negative impact on the domestic political scene. If this happens, the process of rapprochement and partnership-building between Romania and Hungary could be slowed down, if not compromised altogether. The impact on all the political leaders who worked hard to accomplish a major breakthrough in the Romanian-Hungarian relations could be serious, even devastating. Thus, the ground would be prepared for those nationalistic and extremist politicians who opposed all along the development of normal partnership relations between Romania and Hungary to acquire renewed credibility and audience with the implicit risk of weakening internal stability »”³².

This so-called threat was not true and proved to identify a totally wrong strategy of convincing NATO about the necessity of integrating Romania. It is worth mentioning that, on 11 February 1998, the US State Department confirmed that Romanian failure to catch the first wave of NATO enlargement did not disturb the area nor had it any dire consequences for the internal stability of the country: „Worries that those countries not initially invited to join, such as Romania and Slovenia, would feel isolated or be destabilised by the enlargement process have not materialised”³³.

The first reaction by foreign minister Adrian Severin to the US decision to support only three countries and not Romania for the first round of NATO expansion, in June 1998, was the following assessment: „This decision does not sufficiently protect the United States' interests in Central and Eastern Europe(...)”³⁴.

The Romanian strategy before Madrid made Edward Cody of *Washington Post* write on 26 August 1997: „ (...) President Emil Constantinescu's government waged a quixotic campaign for admission with backing from

France but little chance of success¹³⁵. The decision by the US Administration to support NATO enlargement with only three candidate countries and leave Romania aside produced bitter remarks in Bucharest. President Constantinescu considered the American decision as being a „cynical“ one, „incapable to meet NATO's global interests“¹³⁶.

The visit paid by President Clinton to Romania immediately after Madrid helped alleviate Romanian political leadership's resentments. President Clinton was cheered in Bucharest by tens of thousands of enthusiastic people who gave a warm welcome to the American leader. A month later, Edward Cody, highlighted in the same column: „The US decision to limit the first cut of NATO expansion to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic

Conclusions

The criteria for eligibility to NATO membership are vague since democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights, civil control of the military, free market oriented economy and economic reform, good neighbourly relations and the capacity to contribute to the security of the Euro-Atlantic area do not speak sufficiently about general and particular interests of NATO members in terms of political realism which still prevails as the most reputed doctrine of international relations. Of course, the above mentioned criteria are relevant for the identity of a community of values the Central European countries are striving for, but the performances in those fields are not enough to recommend a country for accession to NATO or EU.

The United Kingdom (a model of democratic society), as already mentioned, had to wait for 13 years before being accepted into the European Communities because it was considered politically unreliable and not as a consequence of its economic or democratic performances. Portugal was a founding member of NATO in 1949, under a very harsh dictatorial regime, which contradicted the very democratic basis of the Alliance enshrined in the Treaty of Washington. In both cases, the interests of EC and NATO members were of paramount

formalised at the Madrid summit conference, has not generated the resentment predicted by some last spring (...) Instead, Romania is redoubling efforts to cement close strategic ties with the United States, recognising Washington's determinant role in NATO as well as its interest in East European and Balkan stability¹³⁷. This change in Romanian politics was focused on the alleged US and NATO commitment, enshrined in the Madrid document, to nominate Romania for the second wave of NATO enlargement to be decided at the Washington summit, in 1999. President Constantinescu even predicted that Romania would be nominated for NATO membership in 1999, and would enter the organisation in 2001³⁸. Prime Minister Radu Vasile admitted only in June 1998 that Romania would not be nominated for NATO membership in 1999.

importance including the necessity of preserving and safeguarding democracy in the Euro-Atlantic area. But promoting these interests did not always mean turning democracy into the most important criterion.

Democracy, which is the basis for security and prosperity in the West, has indeed to be protected, but, if reliable would-be allies of the West, which are not quite democratic, could contribute to the safeguarding of Western democratic values, they can be brought into the structure and adapted in the long run to 'local democratic conditions'. The Portuguese example is not the only one. And it seems that political credibility, or the ability and capability of the candidate to promote, besides its own interests, those of the structures it wishes to integrate into, and in which the rules of democracy are a mere obligatory indicator of its readiness to engage in a much more and complex undertaking, are the basic requirements for eligibility to NATO membership.

Romania definitely aims at becoming part and parcel of the Western structures and it has some good results on this path: the legislative reform to match Western standards, the developing process of privatisation, the reform of the Romanian armed forces³⁹. But Romania is in a very special geostrategic position, too close to

the Russian interest's zone today. Many of the tribulations of the Romanian officials were due to the strange perception that Romania was going to be left anyway asunder by the enlargement process. Even if NATO decides in this sense, there will still be the EU option. Even if EU is undertaking in its own turn a restructuring process and its economic policies seem to rise much bigger problems for the newcomers than NATO is rising in the political and military fields, the EU enlargement could just be the political corridor for candidate countries to accede to NATO. This option seems also to leave a door wide open for Romanian accession as an associate country, in accordance with the Romanian economic and legislative reform performances, which have to be increased and accelerated to catch up with the other candidate countries of Central Europe.

On the other hand the West will have to assess in a proper fashion their security interests in the area. The fact that there are no longer rival political groupings among Western countries, today, does not help a lot to lessen the danger of reconstituting the political patchwork of Central and Eastern Europe and the rivalries of yesterday, so much more as we have in view the sour developments in the Balkan area. The role Romania can play in this context is still to be seen and proved but the Euro-Atlantic structures should not neglect its potential as a would-be ally. The contribution Romania can make to the stability of the area is still to be assessed properly by the West, which cannot afford any new mistakes, and delays such as those related to Bosnia and the war in former Yugoslavia. Kosovo is a very vivid warning ...

¹ The accession talks were concluded in December 1997 and the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty on the accession of the three countries were signed, in Brussels, on 16 December 1997.

² Cf. Doorstep Interview by Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr Tony Blair, Madrid, 8 July 1997.

³ Paragraph 8 of the Madrid Declaration on Euro - Atlantic Security and Co - operation issued by the Heads of State and Government on 8 July 1997 reads as follows: „(...) With regard to the aspiring members, we recognise with great interest and take account of the positive developments towards democracy and the rule of law in a number of South - eastern European countries, especially Romania and Slovenia (...) At the same time, we recognise the progress achieved towards greater stability and cooperation by the states in the Baltic region which are also aspiring members (...)”.

⁴ Cf. Opening Statement by Marc Grossman, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs before the House International Relations Committee, October 29, 1997, in *USIS Washington File*, 29 October 1997, Text: Asst. Sec. Grossman Testimony to Congress on Europe Oct. 29 (Hearing of House International Relations Committee) (4120).

⁵ Cf. Statement by Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, December 16, 1997.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ Cf. „NATO for a New Generation., Speech by the Defence Secretary, Mr George Robertson, to the National Conference of the Atlantic Council of the UK, Church House, London, 19 November 1997.

⁸ Cf. Ambassador Alexander Vershbow, US Permanent Representative on the North Atlantic Council, Question and Answer Session with the Czech Press on NATO Issues, April 17, 1998, American Center, Prague, Czech Republic, in *USIS Washington File*, 24 April 1998, Text: Ambassador Alexander Vershbow Q&A with Czech Press on NATO (April 17: Wide-ranging discussion on NATO enlargement) (5380).

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ Art. XI: „The High Contracting parties may, by agreement, invite any other State to accede to the present Treaty on conditions to be agreed between them and the State so invited (...)”.

¹¹ Art. IV of the modified Brussels Treaty reads as follows: „In the execution of the Treaty, the High Contracting Parties and any Organs established by Them under the Treaty shall work in close co - operation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Recognising the undesirability of duplicating the military staffs of NATO, the Council and its Agency will rely on the appropriate military authorities of NATO for information and advice on military matters”.

¹² Paul E. Gallis, Specialist in West European Affairs, Foreign Affairs and National Defence Division, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, „NATO: Enlargement in Central Europe”, November 10, 1994, p. 12.

¹³ „Study on NATO Enlargement”, September 1995, para. 18, pp. 7 - 8.

¹⁴ Cf. *Agenda 2000 - Volume II - Communication: REINFORCING THE PRE - ACCESSION STRATEGY; DN: DOC / 97 / 7; Brussels, 15 July 1997; Communication: The effects on the Union's policies of enlargement to the applicant countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Impact study); Part II. ANALYSIS; 1. THE EXTERNAL DIMENSION; 1.1. Political.*

¹⁵ Apud Hans Stark, „Allemagne - Russie: les aléas d'un partenariat difficile”, in *Politique Etrangère*, No. 3, Automne 1996, 61e Année, p. 610.

¹⁶ Apud John Borawski, „Partnership for Peace and beyond”, in *International Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 2 April 1995, p. 237.

¹⁷ Art. V of the Treaty of Washington governing NATO reads as follows: „The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all; and consequently they agree that if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security the North Atlantic area (...)”. As very clearly stated the allies are not obliged to use military force to assist one of them under attack, the military force being only one of many options „deemed necessary”. Art. V of the modified Brussels Treaty governing WEU reads as follows: „If any of the high Contracting Parties should be the object of an armed attack in Europe, the other High Contracting Parties will, in accordance with the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, afford the Party so attacked all the military and other aid and assistance in their power”. As very clearly stated the allies are obliged to use military force to assist one of them under attack.

¹⁸ In the meantime Gheorghe Funar left PUNR and the party itself has undergone since then a process of transformation in order to match the criteria of political respectability (despite retaining some clear nationalistic tendencies).

¹⁹ Cf. Mr. Karsten Voigt (Fed. Rep. of Germany), Working Group Rapporteur, supported by Senator William Roth (USA), Working Group Chairman and Mr. Charlie Rose (USA), Political Committee Chairman, „The Enlargement of the Alliance”, Draft Special Report of the Working Group on NATO Enlargement, Defence and Security Committee, North Atlantic Assembly, AL 208, DSC/NE (94) 2, November 1994, para. 24, p. 8.

²⁰ Cf. *Curierul Național*, Year VI, no. 1390, September 30, 1995.

²¹ *Loc. cit.*

²² Cf. *Evenimentul zilei*, Year V, no. 1137, March 21, 1996.

²³ Radu Timofte, the Chairman of the Senate Defence Committee bitterly criticised the remarks made by Minister Tinca by saying: „Not only will non-integration into NATO be a disaster for Romania, but even non-integration in the first wave will be the same”. Cf. *Evenimentul zilei*, Year V, no. 1138, March 22, 1996.

²⁴ Cf. *Vocea României*, no. 715, April 8, 1996.

²⁵ Cf. *Vocea României*, no. 716, April 9, 1996.

²⁶ Cf. *Adevărul*, no. 1842, April 12, 1996.

²⁷ Adress by the President of Romania, Emil Constantinescu, to the North Atlantic Council, Brussels, 4 February 1997, in *White Book on Romania and NATO*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997, p. 52.

²⁸ Cf. „Emil Constantinescu: NATO fără Polonia sau România « nu are sens »”, in *România liberă*, No. 2097, 19 February 1997.

²⁹ *Ibidem.*

³⁰ *White Book on Romania and NATO*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997, p. 19.

³¹ William Drozdiak, *Washington Post* Foreign Service, „U.S., Allies Split on NATO/9 of 16 Members Favor Adding Romania, Slovenia in 1999”, in *Washington Post*, Wednesday, June 11, 1997, p. A25.

³² *BASIC Notes*, „NATO Expansion and the Excluded Countries: A new Division of Europe”, July 1997.

³³ Text: The State Department on the Enlargement of NATO, in *USIS Washington File*, 11 February 1998 (Why enlarging NATO strengthens U.S. security) (8640).

³⁴ Adrian Severin, „Abia la Madrid vom ști exact formula finală”, in *Azi*, No. 1498 (2080), 13 June 1998.

³⁵ Edward Cody, *Washington Post* Foreign Service, „Romania Steps Up Efforts to Secure Spot in NATO”, in *Washington Post*, Tuesday, August 26, 1997, Page A11.

³⁶ Cf. „Președintele Emil Constantinescu apreciază că excluderea României din primul val al extinderii NATO este cinică”, in *Jurnalul Național*, Year V, No. 1238, 24 June 1997.

³⁷ Edward Cody, *Loc. cit.*

³⁸ Cf. „Constantinescu ne vede în NATO în 2001 și în UE în 2005”, in *Evenimentul Zilei*, Year VI, No. 1668, 18 December 1997.

³⁹ See Mr. Frank Cook (United Kingdom), Mr. Tamas Wachsler (Hungary), Mr. Ion Rațiu (Romania), Co-Rapporteurs, „Partnership for Peace: A Basis for New Security Structures and an Incentive for Military Reform in Europe”, Annex 2, Sub-Committee on the Future of the Armed Forces, Defence and Security Committee, North Atlantic Assembly, AN 88, DSC/AF (96) 3.