

# ROMANIA'S ACCESSION TO NATO AFTER THE PRAQUE SUMMIT

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NATO's Summit in Prague which took place between the 21<sup>st</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November adopted the decision to invite seven new countries to join the Alliance. Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania will start negotiations with a view to adhere to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

1. But NATO's Summit in Prague was more than that. It was a real "Summit of transformation". After the terrorist attack of the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, intensive debates have been taken place on both sides of the Atlantic. Some, mainly Americans, consider

- *Extension of NATO*

The invitations addressed to the seven new countries to join NATO, and their real chances to become in one or two years full members of this Organisation, will represent a "robust extension", transforming NATO from a "western European structure", into a structure covering the whole Europe, from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, and from

- *Changes in NATO's structure*

The decision to create a rapid intervention force of approximately 20,000 military men will bring also changes in the internal structures of NATO, including the concentration of command structures and offering the technological means for commanding this force.

that United States do not need allies any more and others, mainly Europeans, promote the idea that the United States are heading towards unilateral action. All these debates could not affect the generally accepted idea that there is no alternative to a joint action United States-Europe when security matters are at stake.

These were the conditions representing the general background for the Prague Summit. The debates and decisions adopted are practically representing radical changes in three main directions:

the Atlantic to the external limits of the Community of Independent States.

It is a very important transformation, which is bringing NATO in direct contact with two zones of instability: the former Soviet Union and the Middle East. This new situation will undoubtedly influence the future activity of NATO.

Even if an increase in the military expenditures is difficult to envisage, the creation of supplementary resources by reducing outdated military units, cooperating in the armament production and procurement, as well as joint operation of forces by two or more States could also be envisaged.

• *Changes in NATO's priorities*

The Prague Summit also represents an important re-evaluation of the priorities of the Alliance. Compared with the classical approach of the security – fighting against a conventional or nuclear attack on one or more members of the Alliance, the new priorities are now different.

- On the top priority there is now *the war against terrorism*. Fighting against this real danger for the security of all the Member States of NATO and for the international peace and democracy in general is, under the conditions prevailing after September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on United States, the top priority of NATO.
- Preventing the proliferation of mass destruction weapons – nuclear, chemical and bacteriological – is another priority from among those underlined by this recent Summit taking place in Prague. Even if the Iraqi subject was not officially on the agenda of the Summit, it is obvious that the existing doubts, serious doubts, about the dangers of programs of this kind is a theme of preoccupation for all the NATO members.

2. For Romania, the invitation to adhere to NATO has a high political significance, higher than for other States invited. The reason is that for all the candidate countries to NATO, except Romania and Bulgaria, the horizon of their integration into the European Union is 2004, practically at the same moment with their accession to NATO. For Romania, joining the European Union is a longer prospective. The year 2007 was mentioned by the Romanian authorities, without having any assurance that it will be respected. That's why, for Romania, this invitation represents the only official inclusion in a key structure of the Western Democracies. At the same time, this invitation for Romania is a clear support for the continuation of the democratic process and of the economic reform in our country.

Under this circumstances which are the main consequences and priorities for Romania in the next period to come:

**The first priority, a legal one**, is to concentrate, in the next 3 to 4 months, on negotiating and signing the accession documents between Romania and NATO. After their signature, a clear priority will be to concentrate on the ratification of these legal documents by the Parliaments of all 19 NATO Member States, permitting thus a full accession of Romania by the year 2004.

It is important to understand that, legally, this procedure will be much wider than we can imagine at a first sight. It will also include the modification of the Romanian Constitution, article 117, para. 5 which states: "On the Romanian territory, foreign troops cannot enter or transit unless a special law provides the necessary conditions to be respected." It is also important to note that after the full adherence to NATO, from the legal point of view there are other legal implications among which the signing of a number of other agreements, like:

- The Agreement between the Member States of the North Atlantic Treaty concerning the status of their military forces (London, 1952);
- The Protocol concerning the status of the International General Staff, elaborated on the basis of the North Atlantic Treaty, also named The Paris Protocol (Paris, 1952);
- The Agreement concerning the status of the North Atlantic Treaty, national representatives and the International Secretariat (Ottawa, 1951);
- The Agreement concerning the status of permanent missions and of the representatives of third States to NATO (Brussels, 1994);
- The Agreement between NATO Member States on the intelligence security (Brussels, 1997);
- The Agreement for the reciprocal protection of inventions secrets concerning the military field for which patents are requested (Paris, 1960);
- The Agreement between NATO States on communication of technical intelligence related to defense (Brussels, 1970);
- The ATOMAL agreements relevant for the Allies with nuclear capabilities.

All these Agreements which Romania already started to sign (e.g. the SOFA Agreement, or the Agreement on permanent Missions), to which other procedures and practices will be added, represent a real **NATO acquis** which has to be not only incorporated in the internal law but also applied by all competent institutions.

**The second priority** is to offer the necessary resources for continuing the reform of the Romanian Army. The recommendation of NATO for candidate countries is to allot 2% of their GDP for military expenditures. From the public data it appears that Romania is the biggest contributor of the candidate countries.

Country	% of GDP	Millions	Armed Forces (thousands)
Estonia	1.70	94	4,500
Lithuania	1.80	215	12,200
Latvia	1.16	87	6,500
Slovakia	1.98	394	33,000
Slovenia	1.50	283	7,600
Bulgaria	2.80	373	77,300
Romania	2.50	989	103,000

This is a proof that the Romanian Parliament took seriously into consideration its responsibilities and also a sign that it will act accordingly in the years to come. For a period of 10 years we can appreciate that the total amount of funds available for the military needs in Romania will arrive at app. 15 billions US dollars.

But money alone will not solve the problem of reforming the Romanian Army. It has to pass through the process of reductions in personnel, especially officers who are overstaffing the army, the passage to a professional army and a better training and equipment, which will ensure the interoperability with armies from other NATO Member States. From this point of view, the attention should be concentrated, in the first phase, on the so-called CCIC complex, respectively, command, control, intelligence and communication techniques. In a second stage, the effort should be concentrated on standardizing the military equipment following NATO requirements.

A very important line of thinking, taking into account the limited resources of all candidate countries, is to start examining the possibility of joining forces, either through joint units as it the case of the Romanian-Hungarian regiment, or through common investments in expensive military materials, like fighter jets or sophisticated radars. A

very simple example is the idea of surveillance of the aerial space of the Black Sea, where Romania and Bulgaria could easily join resources in creating a common system instead of doubling their efforts and expenses.

**A third priority** for Romania is to re-launch the efforts for increasing the efficiency of the national policy and the national system devoted to fight against the international terrorism and the danger of proliferation of mass destruction weapons.

Romania is among the States which founded, in 1996, the so-called Wassenaar Agreement through which the participants accepted clear engagements not to transfer sensitive technologies which could be used for producing mass destruction weapons or means for their delivery without proper consultations between themselves. At the same time, a National Agency for approving any transfers of military equipment was created and is currently functioning under the aegis of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Romania. The proper policies and the necessary means should be devoted to these activities.

Concerning terrorism, Romania has already joined the other democratic countries in their fight against this real danger of the globalised world. What is

needed after Romania's joining NATO is a clear understanding that the situation of our country has radically changed. After the Second World War, Romania was not confronted with important terrorist actions. Moreover there are indications that the communist regime had contacts with such activities and persons involved in them. The "Carlos Case" and other situations (see the actions against journalists from Radio Free Europe) seem to demonstrate that such relations did exist and Romania was perceived as a "friendly country" for terrorists and terrorist activities. Joining NATO places Romania in a different camp; the camp of those fighting terrorism. Consequences are clear and our authorities have to face it in a very responsible manner. From the legal point of view, Romania has adopted an Urgency Ordinance of the Government, No. 141 of 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2001. This legal document, even if hastily adopted and incomplete (it lacks provisions concerning the financing of terrorist activities) is a very clear indication of the political will to create the legal means for an enhanced action, at the national level. It has to be developed and completed by the ratification of all United Nations conventions in the field and by an active participation, together with the other democratic States in the debates for the future elaboration of an international legal framework devoted to this issue.

**A fourth priority** for Romania is to continue to be an active participant in the Partnership for Peace Program and to devote serious diplomatic efforts for a Policy to the East, first of all for a policy devoted to

the development of good relations with Russia.

From the moment when the PfP idea was launched by the United States, in 1993, Romania strongly supported this program, which permitted candidate countries to prepare for joining NATO. Romania was the first country which signed, in 1994, the PfP Agreement and had a very diligent participation in the activities taking place under its aegis. Joining NATO should not mean that this program is not important for Romania anymore. On the contrary, as a "border country" of NATO to the East, Romania should continue to play an active role in the PfP.

A clear policy to the East, a policy for Moldova, Ukraine and Russia has to become a top priority for the Romanian diplomacy. There are a number of steps to be taken, among which the conclusion of basic treaties with Moldova and Russia and the updating of the legal framework for the economic and cultural relations as well as for the development of political relations.

Last but not least, **the priority of priorities for Romania** in the period to come is the acceleration of the restructuring of Romanian economy in order to arrive as soon as possible at a functioning market economy. The biggest problems for our country in the prospective of joining NATO is poverty and corruption. Without decisive policies aimed at reducing and eliminating these two cancers of our society, the objective of becoming full members to NATO will remain a political goal without a real substance.