

WAYS AND METHODS TO OPTIMIZE THE SELECTION PROCESS OF PERSONNEL PARTICIPATING IN MULTINATIONAL OPERATIONS

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Abstract:

Given Romania's participation in multinational operations under the auspices of the United Nations and the leadership of international security organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union, in this article we have addressed the issue of optimizing the selection process of personnel participating in such military actions, which, in our opinion, is not only a necessity, but also a functional reality that influences the way the entire process is organized. The purpose of this article is to highlight a series of aspects that influence the management, planning and selection of military personnel participating in multinational operations outside the country. In the study conducted, we used the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) as a research method, to identify the normative acts that should be modified at the level of the military institution, to assess the impact of these changes on the selection process of military personnel for participation in multinational operations. Through the research conducted, we analyzed the extent to which the existing regulatory framework in the analyzed field ensures permanent adaptation to the realities of the new geopolitical and geostrategic environment, respectively the way in which the management structures of the personnel in the Romanian army manage to manage the legislative changes specific to this field.

Keywords: NATO; EU; multinational operations; efficiency; personnel management; selection process; Romanian Army.

Introduction

The accession and subsequent integration of our country, at different times, into Euro-Atlantic security organizations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union

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(EU), represents, in the opinion of many political-military analysts, a natural consequence of the social, economic, human, material and financial efforts of Romania as a state and of the military institution as an organization to correctly address some of the challenges of the 1990s and later, of the first years of the 21st century, such as the multinational operations carried out under the aegis of two other international security organizations, with regional and global coverage, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations (UN).

Romania's acceptance into NATO and the EU represented, in our opinion, a combined result of the reform and transformation processes of public institutions in our country, including the military institution. Thus, the participation of the staff and force structures of our country in multinational operations such as those in Somalia, the Republic of Moldova, Angola, Congo, the post-Yugoslav region, Albania, Iraq and Afghanistan, Mali, the Central African Republic, to name just a few, led to the creation of the conditions for acceptance and, subsequently, integration of our country into NATO and the EU, respectively, for the recognition of the professionalism of the Romanian military alongside those from the member states of the aforementioned organizations. (Neag, 2004, p. 1).

Existing legal framework

Participation in multinational operations, led by the UN, OSCE, NATO or EU, before and after our country's accession to the last two international security organizations was accompanied by a whole series of challenges, of a diplomatic, economic, financial, military and human nature. This type of involvement has always required a deep analysis of the existing geopolitical and strategic environment, of the security climate in the countries where the Romanian Army's force structures were deployed and, last but not least, repeated attempts in terms of organizational structure, endowment with military equipment and technology, allocation of considerable material and financial resources that aimed at the need to adapt to international military realities and to the implications identified in all areas of social life.

Firstly, the involvement of the Romanian army's force structures imposed a series of legislative changes at the military institution level, allowing them not only to take part in various military actions but also to

execute a wider range of operations, in cooperation with large units and units belonging to other states contributing troops (Alexandrescu, Duțu, 2007, pp. 15-16). Thus, the selection process of the military participating in the military operations, mentioned above, underwent a series of changes that primarily concerned, in addition to expressing volunteerism, a series of theoretical and practical knowledge, high-level mental and physical skills and, very importantly, an appropriate level of knowledge of one of the international languages of communication, with a predilection for English.

Secondly, depending on the country of deployment, the selection process also considered a component that targeted the standard operating procedures in the mission area, the realities of the deployment area, the risks and threats to which the participating soldiers could be exposed, on a case-by-case basis.

Although subject to normative regulations and habits formed over time, most of the time resistant to change, the selection process has become more efficient, with the passing of the years, with the gradual integration of our country into NATO and the EU, but also based on the experience gained in multinational operations by the Romanian military. A quick evaluation of such a selection process highlights both for the military participants (together with the structures they are part of) in multinational operations, and for the staff personnel who occupy various positions in multinational commands, five important tests, of which we mention: the English language test, the physical fitness level test, the psychological test, the theoretical (and practical) knowledge test, respectively the medical visit, the last stage that certifies the level of health and allows those participating in the selection to fulfill the missions received in optimal conditions.

For those who have taken part in such a selection process, whether they were tested or were part of those who organized and led the process itself, there are already known situations in which, after passing tests, such as those of knowledge of the English language (ALCPT test¹), physical fitness and psychological testing, some of the candidates remaining in the race were either poorly prepared for the specifics of

¹ American Language Course Placement Test – an English language test designed to measure English ability levels through listening and reading.

the position, or did not know the foreign language well enough. Subsequently, the medical examination, the last of the tests (placed at the end, somehow for financial reasons, not always understandable) led to unsatisfactory results in terms of the number of soldiers admitted. Functions such as those in the legal, financial, medical, psychological fields were always difficult to fill by the candidates registered for the selection competition, perhaps also from the perspective of a need for fewer functions in the Romanian Armed Forces and less physically demanding ones that would allow them to easily pass the physical tests, most of the time, these tests being difficult trials for the participants to overcome. Thus, completing the selection process was and we still consider it to be a “burden” for those involved, given that for the recruitment of not very numerous structures, with a specific and special destination, such as those of the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams or the National Support Element, several selection sessions are carried out, in order to fully recruit these units.

In some cases, for objective selection reasons, some of these subunits went to the theaters of operations without being fully assigned. Although such situations have happened and will probably happen again, and although at the level of personnel structures such events accumulate that go from the stage of identified lesson to that of learned lesson (Pînzariu and Mocanu, 2016, pp. 70-71), legislative amendments that would ensure a high efficiency of the selection process are delayed, and in some cases, debates on this topic are even very little accepted.

Given that the process of attracting human resources to the Romanian Army is quite difficult (Alexandrescu and Duțu, 2007, p. 21), which does not always have as its main causes the lack of interest of the population of our country, the low degree of popularization of this process, the salary level (which has nevertheless been increasing in recent times), causes of a demographic nature or the nature of the selection pools existing in our country, we consider that optimizing the selection process for participation in multinational operations under the leadership of NATO and the EU is gaining much greater importance than some or other of the current military decision-makers want to accept. In this situation, we consider it necessary to review the entire selection process for participation in multinational operations to ensure a complete level of recruitment, as far as possible only with soldiers from

the structures nominated to participate (in singular cases with personnel from other structures) as well as staff personnel, who are to fill non-permanent positions within regional commands.

Scientific research methodology

The purpose of the research conducted in the field of human resources management was to identify the normative provisions that should be made, in order to ensure an increased level of efficiency in the selection process, given that both military structures and staff personnel from the Romanian army can participate, under the existing legislative framework, in an extensive range of operations conducted under the leadership of NATO and the EU, respectively within coalitions of forces, in some situations. From this perspective, participation in this type of operations brings important benefits to the army and our country through the continuous contribution to the efforts of the international community to ensure peace and security at a global level.

In the approach taken, we considered, in addition to the legislative provisions found in various laws, regulations, orders and instructions issued at the level of the Ministry of National Defense, a series of scientific references of high value (modern approaches, theories, reports, etc.) in the field of human resources management, on the basis of which we conducted this research.

Thus, we analyzed a series of scientific research papers, such as: the paper prepared by Alexandrescu, Grigore, Petre, Duțu, entitled *Optimization of the regeneration of the Romanian Army structures engaged in military actions outside the national territory*, 2007; the article prepared by Grigoraș, Răzvan, entitled *Prospective scientific methods in national security*, 2022; the article prepared by Ivorschi, Rodica, *SWOT analysis – a managerial tool for making the activity more efficient*, 2012; the article written by Lungulescu, Marilen, Alexandru, Adomnicăi, *Human resources in the Romanian Army, on the path of interoperability with similar structures from the armies of NATO member states*, 2012; the article by Palaghia, Mihai, *Principles and content of the force generation and regeneration system*, 2004; the material prepared by Neag, Mihai, *Present and perspectives regarding Romania's participation in NATO actions*, in Journal of the Academy of Land Forces, no 1, 2004; the study prepared by Pînzariu, Sorin, Bixi-Pompiliu, Mocanu, "Logistics Guide for Theaters of

Operations”, 2016 or the article written by Stoica, Viorel, “Force Reserve and the Mechanism for Completing Losses in Military Actions”, in 2015. At the same time, we analyzed a series of legislative provisions, presented in the bibliography, laws, GEO, ministerial orders, doctrines, and strategies, orders prepared at the level of the Chief of the Defense Staff or the heads of the armed forces categories.

The research objectives aimed, firstly, to identify the elements of novelty, at an international level, regarding the process of selecting human resources for participation in multinational operations and, secondly, to determine the overlapping elements regarding the tests administered for the actual selection with the tests that each soldier goes through, through the training process, within the units to which the soldiers belong. In this regard, we took into account the answers to research questions, such as: What are the elements of novelty identified at an international level? What are the legislative changes that need to be made to increase the efficiency of the selection process? Last but not least, we sought answers to the question: What are the concrete ways and means of increasing the interest of the Romanian army soldiers in taking part in such a selection process, which does not always end with participation in multinational operations led by NATO and the EU?

In this context, the research aimed to analyze the internal mechanisms of the human resource generation and regeneration system, with the aim of transforming it into a modern one based on concepts verified in military actions, normative regulations similar to those in other NATO and EU member states. Thus, we considered carrying out a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), in order to identify those provisions of the existing legislation that should be modified at the level of the military institution, in order to determine their impact on the selection process of soldiers for multinational operations.

In terms of data collection, we used the technique of research and documentary analysis of representative documents, accepted at institutional level, within the NATO member states, the EU or our strategic partner, the United States of America (USA), these being mentioned in the bibliography. The sources analyzed provided us with an overview of the subject addressed and contributed to the effective understanding of the research results. The analysis carried out considered

both the current geopolitical and geostrategic context, but also the existing trends within the NATO and EU member states in terms of attracting human resources and recent developments in this field.

In order to maintain the relevance of the research, in the analysis we considered, in addition to various documents developed during the early period of the Romanian Army's participation in multinational operations, the time interval 2020-2025, which allowed us to obtain a correct assessment of recent trends and developments in the field of human resources.

Starting from the need to streamline the conceptual, normative, organizational and action-oriented process of generating and regenerating structures involved in multinational operations, we have continuously followed those current elements resulting from the participation of Romanian military personnel in foreign missions, so as to ensure not only an element of concreteness throughout the scientific research, but also to generate a new type of approach, which would ensure the adaptation of the system addressed to similar systems in NATO and EU member states. Also, in this regard, we have considered the need to identify those mechanisms and paths of action that would allow the development of a modern process of generating and regenerating military units and subunits participating in multinational operations.

Considering the two research methods, the analysis carried out was organized on two important levels.

a. The first research direction targeted human resources management in order to participate in multinational operations with an emphasis on important aspects such as the regulatory framework aimed at regulating the participation of the Romanian Army in military actions carried out outside the national territory, the organization and conduct of the human resource selection process for this type of military actions, respectively the normative, organizational and procedural streamlining of the entire process of generation and regeneration of the military, through the lens of SWOT analysis..

b. The second research direction aimed to identify the particularities of the process of generation and regeneration of military personnel who take part in multinational missions abroad, with an emphasis on presenting some of the aspects of the organization and conduct of the selection process in order to complete the existing

regulatory framework, respectively identifying those specific measures for preparing the redeployment and reinsertion of personnel participating in multinational operations.

SWOT analysis is usually used to provide an overview of an organization, respectively to collect the information necessary to protect its interests (Ivorschi, 2012). From an institutional perspective, we believe that this type of analysis allows for a concrete radiography of the normative evolution of the process of generation and regeneration of forces and ensures the quantification of the internal and external influencing factors that act on it, in relation to the other processes that take place at the level of the military institution, in order to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the specific stages of the process addressed in direct relation to the opportunities and threats identified.

In the analysis carried out, we identified a series of strengths of the process of generating and regenerating human resources, from a legislative perspective, through which the selection of human resources intended for participation in multinational operations is ensured, respectively through which the mechanisms necessary for carrying out an organized and planned approach are generated.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the good physical, psychological and medical condition of the personnel of the Romanian Army and the high level of professional training; ● the efficient process of periodic verification, from a physical, psychological and medical point of view; ● the level of remuneration, corresponding to participation in multinational operations; ● the existence of an appropriate work climate that creates conditions for the military to maintain a high level of training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the differentiated initial level of training of soldiers taking part in multinational operations; ● the regulation of the selection method of soldiers participating in operations abroad does not require a clear record of their physical and mental health status, over a determined period; ● the difficulties encountered in planning the resources allocated to the selection process; ● the uncertainties registered among those participating in the selection process.

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● increasing the level of training of participants in multinational operations; ● achieving an appropriate balance between the number of participating soldiers and the budgetary allocation; ● streamlining the selection process determines the formation of a reserve for rapid replacement of soldiers, in a short time; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ensuring sufficient reserves capable of ensuring the conduct of military actions, under optimal conditions; ● increasing the level of professionalization, by executing additional missions; ● increasing the level of interoperability of structures engaged in theaters of operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the general aging of our country's population and implicitly of candidates for participation in multinational operations creates difficulties in terms of military selection; ● overestimation of self, of some of the military deployed in theaters of operations generates the accumulation of frustrations related to the level of salary, the importance given to their work; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● lack of jobs on the domestic market which implies a faster adhesion of candidates for joining the military institution; ● numerous departures from the army, before the completion of the first contract generates problems for the structures that organize selection processes for multinational operations; ● participation in multinational operations of military personnel can generate a distorted image regarding the missions of the structures intended to participate in such military actions; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● numerous fluctuations regarding the level of salary of military personnel, negatively influence their motivation for joining the military profession.

Considering the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and risks mentioned in the SWOT matrix, we wish to develop these aspects as follows:

- the personnel serving in the Romanian Army benefit from an appropriate physical, psychological and medical situation, undergoing not only a strict selection process, but also a specific training process that ensures a volume of knowledge corresponding to the functions for which the military personnel are selected;
- once entered in the military institution, army personnel, regardless of the way in which this approach was achieved and the rank held/obtained (both those who entered via the indirect path and even more so those who followed the direct path) are periodically subjected, according to the training and instruction plans (Stoica, Viorel, 2015, pp. 37-38), to thorough periodic checks both physically (biannually), psychologically (annually), and medically (annually), which ensure appropriate conditions for them to fulfill their tasks in their job descriptions, during their participation in multinational operations;
- the level of remuneration, together with other benefits provided to the military, represents a way in which the Romanian Army fulfills its obligations towards them, consequently expecting them to be able to fulfill their assigned missions at any time;
- ensuring an appropriate work climate to achieve a planned and expected combat potential generates high expectations and responsibilities for the military to maintain their level of training, including through individual study, so as to allow the structures they are part of to fulfill their missions received both in peace, crisis and war, as well as in multinational actions aimed at collective security (Palaghia, Mihai, 2004, pp. 1-2).

The identified strengths contribute to obtaining answers to questions such as those that highlight the need to reform the military selection system for multinational operations. Some of these questions directly concern human resources and focus on the skills and performance of the Romanian military personnel, the advantages arising from the quality of its own personnel and the experience accumulated in various positions prior to their participation in military actions outside national

borders. Other questions to which we obtained expected answers, both positive and less positive, considered the experience of the management teams (decision-makers) and the degree of optimization of decision-making processes, the resources allocated to participation in missions, as well as the technology of the equipment used in this type of military actions. Taking these strengths into account, in the decision-making process, these aspects would lead, in our opinion, to enhancing the attractiveness of the military profession and to creating a certain behavior of experimentation among those aspiring to a career in this field. Last but not least, it would ensure changes to the regulatory framework in accordance with the expectations of both management structures and those of participants in this type of operations.

Regarding the weaknesses, the research conducted allowed us to identify some aspects that, although known, are not addressed properly, so that their effects are, if not eliminated, at least minimized. In this regard, we would like to highlight:

- the level of training of soldiers taking part in multinational operations is differentiated, which creates the premises for inappropriate behavior in extreme situations, in which the soldier is asked to act;
- the regulation of the selection method of military personnel participating in operations abroad does not also aim at an appropriate level of training (scales to be met, results for a previous period of time, medical and psychological observations that ensure a clear and appropriate record of their physical and mental health status);
- the resources allocated to the selection process (human, material, financial) often require supplementation, due to the selection being repeated several times for certain positions, which ultimately represents a loss that no one can compensate for;
- the activities specific to the selection tests create a series of uncertainties both among the participants in the selection process and their commanders, since this type of activities is carried out routinely, every year – medical visits, physical and psychological testing, command training, knowledge of foreign languages, driving and psychotechnical testing for staff personnel.

As in the previous case, the research carried out involved obtaining answers that are usually considered when analyzing weaknesses, such as identifying weaknesses in the selection process, what the level of training should be to allow soldiers to participate in multinational operations, or the behavioral deficiencies that we must consider in carrying out this approach.

On the other hand, questions regarding the level of attachment of the soldiers to the structures they are part of, the existence of financial resources throughout the mission period or the appropriate estimation of the costs to be recorded provided as many answers that came to complete the analysis carried out. Last but not least, another set of questions to which we aimed to obtain answers concerned the possibility of outsourcing, through procurement, of some services in the mission area, including personnel, possible unforeseen expenses generated by the extraction/introduction of soldiers from/into the theater of operations or organizational management questions related to the successful or not carrying out of actions in theaters of operations without repeating the mistakes made previously. Taking concrete measures that would contribute to streamlining and making the selection process of military personnel participating in multinational operations more flexible would ensure not only the modification of the regulatory framework, in the sense of eliminating some of the weaknesses, but also the minimization of most of them, with beneficial results for the structures nominated to be deployed in theaters of operations, respectively for the selection process of staff personnel.

From the perspective of the identified opportunities, we consider that they must be exploited to the fullest extent so as to ensure the increase in the degree of interoperability and compatibility of the Romanian force structures with similar ones belonging to other NATO and EU member states. In this regard, we consider the following aspects to be opportunities:

- increasing the level of professionalization (training) of all military personnel involved in multinational operations (Alexandrescu, Duțu, 2007, p. 21);
- achieving an appropriate balance in terms of the ratio – number of soldiers and budgetary allocations, given that the decrease in

the number of soldiers (through professionalization) balances the budget allocated to their training;

- by increasing the efficiency of the selection process, the formation of a reserve for rapid replacement of soldiers or subunits in the theater of operations is ensured, in a short time;
- eliminating the dysfunctions created in the selection process, through the aging of the population and ensuring sufficient reserves capable of ensuring the conduct of military actions, under optimal conditions, even in conditions where the initial training of these soldiers is different;
- increasing the level of training of military personnel participating in multinational operations allows them to carry out missions that are not included in their job descriptions;
- increasing the level of interoperability of the structures engaged in theaters of operations ensures the conduct of joint actions with other units and subunits belonging to NATO and EU member states, under appropriate conditions.

The questions aimed at clarifying the identified opportunities and which should be leveraged to the maximum, considered the answers obtained when verifying hypotheses. These included: what changes in the external environment that could be exploited; what types of programs for equipping the armed forces with modern technology and equipment will be implemented in the near future, from the perspective of global technological advancements; what behavioral changes occur among military personnel participating in multinational operations both during selection process and after returning from missions.

Another aspect of the research into available opportunities concerns the military selection system from a strategic and operational point of view, the answers to questions regarding the need for diversification or specialization of activities specific to selection or how we can act in terms of attracting human resources, by creating organizational advantages that ensure participation in these foreign operations, with a multinational nature.

The existence of these opportunities can lead, in our opinion, to an acceleration of the transformation process in the field of human resources aimed at creating a new advantageous regulatory framework

for those participating in the selection for multinational operations. The concrete measures that should be considered by decision-makers in the field addressed could contribute to the creation of a modern system, perfectly aligned with similar systems within the member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union.

The identified threats can generate operational difficulties among the military and the structures they are part of, which can contribute to the poor performance of the tasks received. From this perspective, we believe that the threats identified during human resources research must be addressed directly in order to eliminate them or reduce their adverse effects as much as possible.

Thus, we have identified some threats, as follows:

- the general aging of our country's population and implicitly of candidates for the profession of arms, creates a new, quite challenging trend as a result of the increase in the number of professional soldiers and the excessive modernization of military technology and equipment, which creates difficulties in terms of the selection of soldiers for participation in multinational operations;
- the existence, even after several years of participation in multinational operations, of a small number of positions within the structures that take part in such military actions generates a series of cumulative tasks, not specified in the job description, which usually denotes an unrealistic overestimation of self of some of the soldiers deployed in the theaters of operations and generates the accumulation of frustrations related to the level of salary (compared to other soldiers), the importance given to their work, etc. (Alexandrescu, Duțu, 2007, p. 23);
- another threat concerns the lack of jobs on the domestic market, which implies a much faster adhesion of those wishing to join the military institution. This fact most often leads to the acceptance of candidates with a low level of training within the military institution, which creates difficulties later in the training process on a technique with a high technological degree;
- the difficulties encountered in the training process, in a system with a different level of organizational culture, generate

untimely departures from the army, unprepared, respectively before the completion of the first contract. In this sense, the disorder created by these departures creates numerous problems for large units, military units and subunits that organize selection processes for multinational operations, respectively for maintaining their level of operability;

- participation in multinational operations of staff and military structures (by rotation), in addition to the numerous benefits, can also generate a distorted image of the tasks and missions of these large units and units, which must first and foremost aim at national and collective defense, alike. This image must be permanently corrected through various corrective measures that target the entire spectrum of socio-behavioral activities, including training, in which the military are involved;
- the numerous fluctuations regarding the level of military salaries, as well as the discussions in the public space regarding the security of their incomes, generate a series of various deficiencies, from the perspective of the selection process of military personnel who wish to participate (voluntarily) in multinational operations, among which the impact on the motivation for joining the military profession would be the most important, from our point of view (Alexandrescu and Duțu, 2007, p. 24).

The identified threats and the answers to the questions that aimed to address this level of the analysis carried out highlighted the need to increase the attention of the management bodies at all levels of the military system, which must find urgent ways and means to resolve them in order to balance the human resources system, which is in obvious difficulty. In this regard, the questions to which we sought to obtain answers concerned the existing legislative framework and the need to make changes that would support the selection process for participation in multinational operations, including through proposals that would consider the social norms and lifestyles of the military, in the new geopolitical and geostrategic context in which we find ourselves.

Changes in the technological field, those specific to goods and services offered to the military must quickly find answers that contribute to increasing their desire to participate in multinational operations. Last

but not least, the difficulties encountered in the field of recruiting labor for the military system must be resolved through well-thought-out measures that provide predictability and security in the evolution of the military within the Ministry of National Defense, regardless of the structures they belong to.

Ways and means of efficiency improvement

The research conducted on the ways and means of streamlining the selection process of military personnel for participation in multinational operations focuses, in our opinion, on the way in which the selection tests are established and then their order. In this regard, there are opinions in the military environment for and against the conduct of these selection tests and the way in which the entire process is organized. Easier said than done, would say some of those who have become outspoken critics, for various reasons, of the selection process. What should be changed in the way the selection tests are organized and ranked, so that, in the end, we can obtain from the first selection period the necessary number of military personnel to fill the structure, as follows: medically healthy and psychologically fit; with an appropriate level of knowledge of the English language; capable of prolonged physical effort and, on top of that, who are also specialists in a position to fulfill their assigned missions?

In our opinion, a deep and complete re-establishment of the entire selection process on modern bases is necessary, which would gather the best practices in the field and the lessons learned from similar experiences of some of the armies of NATO member states, with an additional emphasis on the way in which human resources are attracted in states such as the USA, Great Britain, France, Germany or the Netherlands. Overlaid on the experiences recorded at the level of the Romanian army, we believe that we could, in this way, achieve a specific, efficient and effective process. From this point of view, taking into account the character and specificity of the human resource within the Romanian Army, we believe that an efficient process of selection of military personnel for participation in multinational operations should take into account the clarification of organizational aspects that aim at the way of carrying out the entire process and providing coherent and

natural answers to questions such as those that allowed the analysis performed in the research activity (SWOT analysis). Natural questions to which we often either do not find consistent answers, or we offer explanations that do not have the gift of clarifying us regarding a more efficient approach to the selection process for multinational operations.

Considering the above, we believe that streamlining the selection process for Romanian military personnel participating in multinational operations within the UN, NATO, EU, and OSCE should take into account, in addition to the voluntary expression of acceptance/desire to participate in such military actions, although here too there would be many arguments for and against, the following aspects:

- conducting a single selection stage, in two steps, with the participation in the first step of the military personnel from the structure nominated to take part in the multinational operation, and in the second step of the military personnel from the structure representing the upper echelon of the first unit, to complete the personnel reserve, respectively the deficit by function, when registered (for single functions this process can reach up to the level of force category command and support command);
- considering, for the purpose of recruitment, the physical fitness tests, medical and psychological visits completed by the military, in accordance with the legal provisions in force in the military institution;
- completion of the entire mission-specific training program by all military personnel, base and reserve, including foreign language training hours;
- introducing periodic mid-mission checks to highlight their level of training and to make the military aware of the need to achieve the standards required for participation in the multinational operation;
- the execution of the final verification, without the right to appeal, by the candidates, visibly, in full transparency, which will ensure the retention among those who will participate in the mission of the military who have understood to fulfill the tasks and responsibilities assumed by the contract, in the best conditions. For those who for various reasons could not pass

the final tests, it is the duty of the units to which they belong to be introduced to intensive training/medical monitoring/other type of training programs, which will allow them to reach in a short time the physical and psychological state necessary to fulfill the obligations assumed by the contract. Otherwise, the decision-makers should decide what will be the way forward in this type of situation, including their transfer to some specific functions in the administrative field.

What would be the conditions for such a selection process to be carried out in good conditions, without generating additional expenses and ensuring the participation in the multinational operation of the most deserving, well-prepared military personnel from all points of view? First, increasing the efficiency of the process of attracting human resources (physical, psychological tests, medical visits carried out transparently, without waiving specific standards), secondly, generating a competition between potential candidates for access to the military system, reviewing the processes and training plans to ensure the accumulation of appropriate knowledge, maintaining the physical and mental qualities of the military personnel, once selected, respectively thorough, extensive medical visits, which would lead to the removal of some of the candidates with gender issues from this endeavor.

Furthermore, we believe that a change in the approach to medical visits, in which family doctors would have a correspondent role during the selection (the military personnel being obliged to bring medical observation sheets from them), with the families of the military personnel ensuring the detection of possible mental problems, difficult to detect even in the case of specialized tests, the creation of sports facilities at the level of military units, would be desirable and would not only provide valuable information for the members of the selection teams, but would also contribute to a more efficient use of both the time and resources allocated, at this time, to this process.

Conclusions

At the end of this article, we consider it is necessary to draw attention to some of the situations that have occurred over time, in one form or another, in this type of process carried out at the level of many

of the military units of the Romanian Army. Thus, many of the situations that have arisen over time during the selection process for participation in multinational operations could have been avoided, through the care of the personnel (decision-makers) who manage the admission processes into the ranks of the armed forces, respectively the training processes at the level of military units.

We can look back and think that by taking all the necessary measures (effective command training, physical training to existing standards, effective and carefully monitored medical visits, permanent training and verification regarding the level of knowledge of foreign languages, etc.) the rate of candidates who do not pass one or more of the selection tests for participation in such missions would have decreased considerably. On the other hand, we believe that the measures that have been taken over time to manage this process not only did not accelerate its efficiency but, in many cases, even contributed to its blockage, to a certain degree of habit, like “let it continue as is”, on certain limits that it would not have been good to maintain. Of course, it is very easy to observe and offer solutions. From this point of view, we believe that all those involved in this normative, legislative, operational and administrative process have present and future responsibilities.

Important steps towards streamlining the process of attracting human resources, respectively of selection for participation in multinational operations, have been made, especially in the last period of time. One aspect worth highlighting would be the transition of military selection from a centralized system, at the level of zonal selection centers, to a decentralized system, at the military unit level, which would allow attracting a larger number of military personnel and would contribute to reversing the process of entries versus exits from the army, in favor of the first situation. Last but not least, the increase in the attractiveness of the functions in the military system has generated much more important entries in the last period of time. The idea of maintaining the balance between those who want to join the Romanian army, who want to participate in multinational operations and the obligations that they assume through the signed contracts is important.

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