

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONTEXT ON HUMAN RESOURCES FOR DEFENCE

*Major General (Ret.) Associate Professor Constantin MINCU, PhD**

***Abstract:** In this article the author briefly presents some aspects related to the influence of the political, economic and social context on the human resources destined for the defence of the country. Some elements are shown regarding a realistic, quantitative and qualitative assessment of citizens capable of military service in peacetime, in crisis situations and in war, in the context of an emphasized demographic decline and a massive emigration process.*

***Keywords:** human resources for defence, value indicators, population of Romania, demographic decline, stage of education of the young generation.*

1. The need for approaching the topic

From 1990 until today (March 2018), Romania has gone through a relatively long way of profound transformation in all areas of social life (politics, economy, finance, banking, education, health, defence, etc.).

Some of these transformations have had beneficial effects in the short and medium term and others were as negative as possible, even dangerous for the Romanian state.

It is not our intention to make a thorough inventory of positive and negative aspects, in this paper, we actually intend to focus on those phenomena that have affected and affect the country's defence, namely: economy and finance, education degradation and the sharper demographic

* Entitled member of the Academy of Romanian Scientists, Member of the Honorary Council of the Academy of Romania Scientists, Scientific Secretary of the Military Sciences Section, Phone: 0722.303.015, email: mincu_constantin@yahoo.com.

decline, as well as the state of the army as the founding institution of an allegedly strong and independent state.

In the context, the topic related to the demographic evolution is considered to be of maximum relevance given the reality of the dramatic decrease of the population of the country from 23,206,720 citizens on 1 July 1990, to 19,660,000 in 2017 (minus 3,546,720)¹. For the last fifteen years I have not met any study on the serious negative effects on defence stemming from the depopulation of the country.

I will try to make a small and modest analysis on this subject.

2. Economy and finances

The economy of a state is the pivot of its existence and permanence, with the emphasis on the positive (few) and negative (many) elements of globalization imposed at an increasingly accelerated pace by the great economic powers of the world, which are also under the influence of multinational corporations (MNCs), more and more greedy and destructive to the world's natural environment.

If we take into account annual GDP per capita, we notice huge discrepancies between the countries of the world, such as: 134,400 USD (Liechtenstein), 108,800 USD (Luxembourg), 84,490 USD (Norway), 47,380 USD (USA), and the last 180 USD - Burundi and R.D. Congo.

Romania with an annual GDP per capita of 7,540 USD is among the last countries in Europe in this respect. Why are we in this situation?

Here are some possible answers:

- The knowingly and reckless destruction, in the past 28 years, of the national industrial patrimony worth some 1,600 billion EUR (public sources);

- In 2017 only 30% of Romania's GDP was achieved from industrial activity;

- Acquiring some chaotic and irresponsible loans, which reached 110 billion EUR in 2018, of which 54 billion EUR - public debt, with no infrastructure or investment ("official" data show lower numbers);

- The cheap alienation of industrial assets and natural resources (oil, gas, aluminium, gold, rare metals, etc.);

¹ *Statistical Yearbook of Romania, 2016*, National Institute of Statistics (In Romanian: *Anuarul statistic al României, 2016*, Institutul Național de Statistică).

- The (politically controlled) compensation performed by NAPR (National Authority for Property Restitution) granted to former owners or “endowed” buyers of litigation rights worth a total of 14.7 billion EUR, of which 70% were fraudulently over-estimated (in fact, here are the money from privatization, external loans and European funds);

- The destruction of the Romanian capital banking system by the direct “contribution” of Romanian governments and political parties, so that today 80% of the banks operating in Romania are foreign, with no interest in the development of the country in which they operate;

- Reducing the country’s foreign reserves to 32 billion EUR and the gold reserve to 103.7 tonnes, caused by the huge external debt and the overwhelming interest payments to the main players of globalization (the IMF and the World Bank);

- Many other causes that have been and are identified by some Romanian economists and finance specialists with a higher sense of justice and animated by patriotism.

Let us bring to light some credible data, published in November 2014, by the National Bank of Romania (NBR) Deputy Governor – Professor Florin GEORGESCU, Ph.D., on the NBR website²:

Where did we start from and where are we now?

In 1989	In 2014
GDP was 42.6 billion, equivalent to the EUR	GDP in 2014 was 150 billion EUR (3.5 times higher than in 1989)
• Industry: 46.2%	• Industry: 25.2%
• Agriculture: 14.4%	• Agriculture: 5.5%
• Constructions: 5.5%	• Constructions: 7.0%
• Other fields: 37.5%	• Other fields: 62.3%
Number of employees = 8.2 million people	Number of employees = 4.4 million people (-46%)
Number of retirees = 3.7 million people	Number of retirees = 5.2 million people (+ 41%)
Dependency rate = 2.2 employees/ retiree	Dependency rate = 0.85 employees/ retiree

² Professor Florin Georgescu, Ph.D., Deputy Governor of the National Bank of Romanian, Study „*Capitalul în România anulul 2015*”, București, 24 noiembrie 2015.

*THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONTEXT
ON HUMAN RESOURCES FOR DEFENCE*

State-owned and cooperative state property to a lesser extent	Public capital - 17% and private - 83% (43% autochthonous - 40% foreign)
No public debt and foreign exchange reserves of 1.5 billion USD	The net public debt was 54 billion EUR (36% of GDP)

The mentioned study notes that from the year 2000 until 2015, the income inflows of the Romanian employees abroad compensated only partially the outflows of foreign capital gains in Romania (thus, in 2013, there were 3.2 billion EUR inflows and 5,9 billion EUR outflows).

Net national income³ is mainly distributed in favour of capital, work incomes are limited. Thus, for work in Romania was granted (2014) 39.7% and in France 62.5%.

The privatization of state-owned companies' social capital was a failure for Romania. 7,500 companies (out of which more than half have disappeared) have been privatized for which 7 billion EUR were cashed out (out of which 2.3 billion EUR, representing 40%, resulted from the privatization of Romanian Commercial Bank - BCR). For the privatized enterprises, an average price of 667,000 euro/per enterprise (without BCR) was obtained, which can be said to have been given almost free of charge.

The 7 billion EUR of privatization have quickly slipped through the messy fingers of the state.

The amounts returned to former owners (descendants, etc.) in goods and in money amounted to 14.7 billion EUR and the process is not completed. It is probably going to take another 100 years.

From the synthesis data presented, it is clear that the Romanian state, by its authorities, has taken care of the management of the public money and the economy, to the exclusive benefit of those who also benefited from the privatization and the restitution process.

In this second part, I have introduced some issues in economics and finance because they have a decisive influence on citizens' lives, the stability of the country and, of course, the allocation of reasonable defence

³ Net national income is calculated as the difference between gross and fixed capital consumption (amortization and depreciation).

resources, rhythmically, according to the commitments assumed as a NATO member state.

3. The situation in Education

In the 28 years that have passed since the events of December 1989, the Romanian education at all levels has undergone a large number of so-called reforms, constituted according to the wishes of the numerous Ministers of Education and Research who have been in charge of this important ministry. Direct and often violent political influences have shaken the education system by politicizing inspectors and executives' functions, by promoting teachers and educators who are unprepared and often bored and lacking motivation.

In recent years, major changes have occurred from six to six months, with negative effects on students and pupils. These frequent changes were not supported by impact studies, were not publicly debated, and the "over-packed" curricula did not take account of new demands on the labour market.

According to the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS), the situation of graduates on levels of education (2014/2015) was: gymnasium - 33.5%, high school - 34.1%, vocational education - 2.1%, post-secondary and foremen education - 6.4%, higher education - 23.9%.

The numbers show that no handicraftsmen are trained in Romania, they have disappeared after the famous "reforms", with major negative consequences for the economy, but also for the young people who choose to enlist in the army.

Educational specialists have concluded that Romanian education is still down to reality in social and economic life, so 40% of gymnasium graduates are declared (based on tests) functional illiterates, that is, they do not understand a text that they are struggling to read, they have poor digital skills, especially those in rural areas, and are totally deprived of the motivation to learn.

Recent national tests have shown that 66% of 8th grade students have received marks under five in mathematics, being the most shameful score in the last twenty-eight years.

To these very weak results we can consider that all the Ministers of Education and Research, the County Inspectorates and most of the teachers

and educators, some poorly trained, and others bored and unmotivated, have brought their fair share of “contribution”. Responsibility also lies with the parents who are not interested in the scholastic “performance” of their children and pupils “stolen” by concerns other than the study.

It should be noted that history classes have gradually disappears from the curricula leaving behind doubtful texts that grossly falsify the facts of the forefathers, texts produced by individuals who have developed a natural hatred towards Romania.

All these facts and phenomena endanger the Romanian society, offering individuals lacking training and moral sense, without any trace of patriotism.

It goes without saying that one of the most affected institutions is the Army, which is forced to fill its ranks with young people who no longer believe in anything and let themselves drift away to nowhere.

4. Demographic decline

The Romanian specialists in demographic issues, as well as those from the National Institute of Statistics, consider that Romania has entered an irreversible trend as regards the dramatic decrease of the country’s population since 1990. This profoundly negative phenomenon is happening under the eyes of the “authority” of political decision-makers who, instead of becoming aware of the danger, take increasingly inappropriate measures that lower birth rates and increase the number of deaths at younger ages.

I suggest to analyse the figures provided by NIS⁴:

TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	%M	%F
1 July 1989 = 23,151,564	11,422,474	11,729,092	49.3	50.7
1 July 1990 = 23,206,720	11,449,147	11,757,573	49.3	50.7
1 July 1995 = 22,680,951	11,123,977	11,556,974	49.0	51.0
1 July 2000 = 22,435,205	10,968,854	11,466,351	48.9	51.1
1 July 2005 = 21,319,673	10,384,483	10,935,190	48.7	51.3
1 July 2010 = 20,246,798	9,856,669	10,390,129	48.7	51.3
1 July 2015 = 19,819,477	9,681,929	10,137,548	48.9	51.1

⁴ National Institute of Statistics, 2016, Bucharest. The largest population in the history of Romania, within current borders (23,206,720) (In Romanian: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2016, București. Cea mai mare populație din Istoria României, în actualele granite (23.206.720)).

According to the NIS in 2017 the population of Romania was 19,660,000, of which M = 9,567,420 (48.7%) and F = 10,092,580 (51.3%), resulting in a decrease compared to 1990 of 3,546,720 people.

The causes of this dramatic decline are numerous, due especially to the wrong policies and the carelessness of the government, among which we could mention: the departure from the country for good, rising mortality rates and declining birth rates (negative growth since 1990, which reached -2% in 2017).

From a demographic-military point of view, we are particularly interested in the age range of 20-54-year-old people. Here is what happened in 2015 (NIS source):

AGE GROUPS	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
20-24	1,103,201	570,830	532,380
25-29	1,388,899	724,043	664,856
30-34	1,325,448	681,897	643,551
35-39	1,552,329	791,691	730,638
40-44	1,520,318	779,348	740,970
45-49	1,581,134	809,804	771,330
50-54	1,094,774	550,424	544,350

From these age groups, young people of both sexes can be recruited to complete the army in peacetime, in crisis situations and in war.

The emigration phenomenon has a negative impact, especially accelerated after 2010.

The figures provided by the authorities are contradictory because there was no concern to know and try to slow down the process of leaving to make a living abroad (by social-economic means). Thus, the figures, according to the source, fluctuate between 3.5 million and 4.5 million, of which 60-80% are youngsters aged between 25 and 39. About half of these youngsters are fit for military service, but it is almost impossible for Romania to rely on them if needed.

However, there is a NIS statistics with the countries where the Romanians emigrated: UK - 28.3%, Italy - 20.8%, Spain - 14.8%, Germany - 13.3%, Belgium - 5.9%, Austria - 4.3%, Denmark - 2.2%, other countries - 10.4%.

If the phenomenon of massive depopulation is not stopped, it is assumed that, in the optimistic version, Romania will have only 16 million

inhabitants in 2040 and in the pessimistic version 14.5 million. The current governors do not show signs of understanding and they do not even care, applying the dictum “after us the flood may hit”.

5. The demographic-military factor and its influence on the dimensioning of human resources for defence

For Romania, the strengthening of defence structures (primarily the Army, but also the other components of the National Defence, Security and Public Order System) is a vital condition of statehood, of maintaining sovereignty and national integrity.

A general analysis of recent global, regional and zonal events has shown a worrying increase in risks, threats and vulnerabilities, including some in our geographical area.

Romania, unfortunately, is located near some turbulent areas, including from a military point of view (Ukraine-Russia, Turkey - with some neighbours, the Western Balkans and the Middle East).

It would have been expected from the national power structures (President, Parliament, Government, Ministries, Central and Local Authorities) to become aware during the 28th anniversary of the Revolution, of the role of the Defence and of the Armed Forces in maintaining the Romanian State. On the contrary - the actions of these decision-makers were firmly directed towards the destruction and humiliation of the small remaining Army.

Let us stop a little on the demographic-military component of the Romanian Defence, in the current geopolitical context.

Thus, in 1989, there were 340,000 soldiers in the army, representing 1.48% of the population, and 820,000 reservists representing the 3.6% of the total population were on the mobilization lists.

Now, in 2018, there are only 60,000 soldiers (out of 70,000 provided for peacetime), accounting for only 0.30% of the population, the lowest level among the Northern Hemisphere countries (only in 2017 left the Army 8,000 soldiers without being replaced until this date). It is estimated that in 2018 there are 80,000 reservists representing 0.35%.

It was thus under the gentle - contemplative glances of political and military decision - makers, that many central structures, headquarters and units were assigned only 35% of what they needed, the biggest deficit being

for officers, due to the lack of correlation for years of the schooling numbers with the dynamics of the Army's natural leaving. The word irresponsibility is already too gentle.

Various self-entitled "political-military analysts" believe that the Romanian Armed Forces are too large, arguing that a small, cheerful and well-armed army is better suited.

But the Army today is just small, not cheerful (poorly paid and attacked daily by the officials of the Romanian state) and poorly endowed with modern technology.

During the course of modern history, the army's effectiveness depended (for us and for others) on several factors:

- **The human-technical ratio** of a given period. It is considered that the modern technique requires fewer troops. This truth works up to a certain minimum limit, which in Romania has already been exceeded;

- **The place** where Romania finds itself in relation to the more or less peaceful intentions of some neighbours;

- **The risks and threats** existing in the region as a result of hot or frozen conflicts;

- **As an eastern border state of NATO and the EU**, there are some greater responsibilities than, to say, in the Netherlands (let us consider the demarcation between the German Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic during the Cold War⁵ and existence at the contact of NATO and of the Warsaw Treaty).

Foreign and some (fewer) Romanians specialists have come to the conclusion that, at peacetime, states can afford armies of between 0.8-1% of the population, in order not to affect economic development and not to burden too much the budget. Already Ukraine, Russia and Turkey are fit into this frame.

At war, depending on the scale of operations, states can increase their effort to 5% of the population and in critical situations even to 10%.

The fact that the Army has only 60,000 soldiers, of which only 2/3 are ready to fight, shows the lack of proper judgement and the carelessness of former and current political decision-makers.

⁵ Gheorghe Calopăreanu, *Regionalizarea securității în Europa Centrală*, Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”, București, 2011, pp. 25-71.

Given the above-mentioned realities and the fact that we are close to zero in terms of modern weapons (but we have wishes unspecified in time) it would have been necessary to have an army between 120,000 and 140,000 soldiers (fighters, not abundantly planted civilian clients in the central structures of Ministry of National Defence - MoD), and the deployable number, in the first phase, should be at least 400,000 people. It would have been an effort, but the defence of State and Statehood costs all over the world. Considering that a young man fit for the military service, who is unemployed, consumes resources without doing anything useful, there would still be a plus to the minimum wage that a professional soldier would receive and two problems would be solved, a social and a military and defence one.

6. Some aspects on the current state of the Army

Analysing the current situation in complete objectivity, without passion and without exaggeration, we can take note of a series of negative facts and events that have caused an inappropriate state of Defence and of the Army:

- The so-called reforms have actually consisted of a single dimension - the dismantling of many military units and the massive reduction of peacetime effectives (4.5 times);

- These irresponsible reductions have not been compensated so far, as promised, with modern equipment and systems;

- The yearly budgets of the MoD were on paper between 1.2-1.4% of GDP, but in reality, by perverse manoeuvres of political and government factors, they were not more than 0.9-1.1% of GDP (with an exception - in Văcăroiu government they were 0.4%). It did not matter at all that by the NATO Accession Treaty (2004) Romania committed itself to defence expenses of 2.28% of GDP;

- Although with the consent of the parliamentary political forces it was decided to ensure 2% starting in 2017, in fact the year 2017 ended with 1.2%;

- an “original” action started in 2010 when the attacking and insulting of active and reserve troops started by the President of Romania and the Prime Minister followed by a cohort of other politicians, journalists and “analysts”;

- The attacks were resumed with even more fury in January 2017 and have been going on until today, with clear signs that they will continue. For this reason, the morale of the units has dropped dramatically, with important consequences, in the event of a military conflict (perhaps exactly that was intended and is still intended). I do not know a case from a country in the Northern Hemisphere where politicians at the head of state do this in an anti-national way, with incalculable consequences;

- It has been obsessively repeated since 2002 that we no longer need an army so badly, due to NATO's defence. This is actually utterly stupid; NATO can defend us if we are able to defend ourselves;

- Older or newer weapon systems and equipment lack possibilities for normal maintenance and repair work, being close to collapse;

- There is a process of reducing the inventory of equipment and materials, some up to zero;

- The planned destruction of domestic production capabilities in the defence field has been taking place and continues to take place;

- Our army's situation is quite bad with respect to important issues, such as the capacity of deterrence and retaliation, e.g. multi-role combat aircraft, attack helicopters, antitank means, tanks and armoured carriers with more hitting impact capacity and survival in battle;

- The equipment of fighters is still obsolete and away from modern standards.

The main provisions of the “**National Strategy for Country Defence**” and those in the “**National Strategy for Country Defence Guide for the period 2015-2016**” are not taken seriously by the decision makers, being considered simple essays without effect.

To sum up, the data and information from public sources shows that the country's defence was deliberately ignored in the last 28 years. Unfortunately, there are weak signals that the situation may improve in the short and medium term, despite the development of defence planning documents and laws, which are ignored immediately after approval or promulgation.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- *** *Statistical Yearbook of Romania, 2016*, National Institute of Statistics (in Romanian: *Anuarul statistic al României, 2016*, Institutul Național de Statistică).
 - *** Documents from public sources on the websites of the Presidency, Government, Ministry of National Defence and other institutions.
 - *** *National Strategy for Country Defence Strategy for the period 2015-2016*, Approved by the Country's Supreme Defence Council Decision of 10.12.2015 (In Romanian: *Ghidul Strategiei Naționale de Apărare a Țării, pentru perioada 2015-2016*, Aprobat prin Hotărârea CSAT, din 10.12.2015).
 - *** *The Military Sciences Journal* no.1-4/2015, 1-4/2016 and 1-4/2017.
 - *** *National Strategy for Country Defence (June 9, 2015)*; Parliament's Decision no. 33, June 23, 2015, Part I, no. 450, 23.06.2015 (In Romanian: *Strategia Națională de Apărare a Țării (09 iunie 2015)*; Hotărârea Parlamentului nr. 33, din 23 iunie 2015, MO partea I, nr. 450, 23.06.2015).
- GEORGESCU F., The Deputy Governor of the National Bank of Romania, Study „*Capitalul în România anului 2015*”, București, 24 noiembrie 2015.

