

The preparations for the NATO Summit have begun in Constanta

British expert Jonathan Eyal: „The EU has not reached an agreement whether the energetic domain is a regular or a strategic market, in which governments can play a role. We must have a closer connection between NATO and the EU but, unfortunately, the European Commission, which has an important say in this matter, is not able to think strategically”.

Recent strategies, evolutions and histories, possible solutions to a problem that has a future indissolubly connected to the future of the human kind, Kosovo, diplomatic and energetic structures, cyber-security, etc. – all these generous subjects of discussion have gathered together the participants in the **International Conference on “Regional security, energetic security and NATO – future possibilities and problems”**, an event organized by the Naval Academy “Mircea cel Batran” in Constanta, as part of the forgoing activities which precede the NATO Summit in Bucharest.

“Energy geopolitics is in close connection with the recent evolutions with regards to acquisitions, refining capacities, transport and new investments. Romania is trying to handle the impact of these evolutions, but it is up to the authorities to decide whether to open the private sector, so that our country can play a role in Europe in this field. Romania was, 100 years ago, an important player in the energy field. We now have to provide, with an energetic mixture, for our internal energetic necessities, and at the same time we have to be able to place offers for cooperation in the energetic domain, with all that this implies. This strategy usually implies several players and a harmonization in this sense is not always very clear from us. Indeed, we are only part of a large international project. But this is also the European way of thinking”, declare the president of the conference, Executive Manager of the EURISC Foundation (European Institute for Risk, Security and Communication Management –editor’s note), Dr. Liviu Muresan. From the point of view of the non-governmental institutions, the approaches to the problems discussed in these conferences can be excellent labs for generating ideas, he said.

Constantin Degeratu, Presidential Counsellor in matters of defense, feels the same way. He pointed out the fact that “it is an honor for Romania to host this Summit, especially in this very important moment for world peace and security. I believe that this conference can provide real solutions for international security problems”.

Kosovo (being discussed) in Constanta

Taking into consideration the self-proclamation of independence of the province of Kosovo and the (un)expected transformations that took place on the world's political scene, General Degeratu stated that security in the Balkans is a problem with much deeper roots. "What happens now is not news, but a complicated problem that forced a decisive moment for finding solutions that should lead to long term stability. This is also complicated because the parties in conflict were not able to reach an agreement with regards to the method for solving this problem and the NATO and EU states are now, for the first time, searching for a solution, at a time when it seems that the international regulations have not managed to keep up with the historical evolution of things. We however hope that such a solution will be found and the NATO Summit in Bucharest will certainly represent a step forward in this direction. Whatever solution is found, it has to be peaceful. Nothing has changed from a juridical and political point of view. Romania is a NATO member and, considering all these, it will maintain its initial stand", the Presidential Counsellor for Defense declared. Liviu Muresan also explained that the Kosovo process is an experiment which we are attending and it is normal to take a stand. "We have to see what the implications of this process are for the two structures we are part of, EU and NATO. Indeed there is a certain degree of international instability, but we are NATO members and it is important that Romania's position was respected within the EU." The most reserved opinion in this matter belongs to Georgeta Gavrila, Secretary General for the National Defense Ministry, who only said that, with regards to "the stay of the Romanian troops in Kosovo, the decision is a political one. Taking into consideration what happened in Kosovo, I believe that security in the Balkans will be influenced. This is the first time that NATO faces a special situation on the field and we hope that the member countries efforts and their commitment live up to the moment". Please be reminded that the Pristina Parliament has unilaterally declared the independence of the province of Kosovo from Serbia on Sunday. On Monday evening, the Romanian Parliament has enacted a declaration regarding the non-recognition of the province of Kosovo, with 257 "pro" votes and 27 "against" votes. The Romanian Parliament does not acknowledge the unilateral proclamation of the independence of the province of Kosovo, considering that the conditions for acknowledging a new entity have not been fulfilled.

Romania, in nuclear danger?!

One of the energetic security risks discussed within the International Conference “Regional security, energetic security and NATO – future possibilities and problems” is the future nuclear plant in Belene, Bulgaria, that will be built with the same technology used in Chernobyl. “We have reasons to believe that Russia has not improved its nuclear technology since 1986. The placing of the nuclear plant in a high seismic risk zone and at 150 Km from Bucharest would be an energetic security risk for Romania”, said General Degeratu. We would like to remind that Vladimir Putin, during his visit in Sofia in January, has signed an energetic agreement, following which a nuclear plant was to be built in Belene.

„We shouldn’t regard NATO as a miracle solution to all problems”

Knut Kirste, liaison officer at the NATO general headquarters, specialized in energetic security, declared: “At the 2006 Summit in Riga, NATO has received a definite mandate to analyze threats to energetic security and to provide answers. But if we look closely, the Riga declaration limits NATO’s role in securing the energetic infrastructure. The topic regarding NATO’s role in energetic security is under discussion and a policy in this matter has not been enunciated yet. We hope to have a clearer view of what will happen, at the Bucharest Summit. But we must be careful, we shouldn’t regard NATO as a miracle solution to all problems.” Speaking about the solutions that NATO could offer, the official said that “the exchange of information between member states can help evaluate the risks”, mentioning that “with regards to the military capability to secure the energetic infrastructure, it remains to be seen to what extent the allies want to do this. We shouldn’t however militarize this discussion and NATO must work in close coordination with the EU and AEIA (Atomic Energy International Association – editor’s note) that each have specific tasks in the energetic field”.

The EU does not have a strategic outlook, and Moscow wants to divide Europe

There were voices that, in all sincerity, have pointed out Moscow’s strategy to divide Europe from an energetic point of view and pointed out the fact that the EU does not have a strategic outlook. Expert Alexandros Petersen from the International and Strategic Studies Center in Great Britain made the distinction between the approaches to this situation: “while the Europeans are discussing the role NATO should play in energetic security, Gazprom

acts in Europe”. The British expert reminded the control that Gazprom has obtained over the Austrian energetic terminal in Baumgarten, the North Stream and South Stream pipes that undermine Poland’s interests, respectively the Nabucco project supported by the EU and the USA, the purchase of the NIS Serbian company by Gazprom at a much lower price than the market price and the energetic agreement signed by Russia with Bulgaria for the South Stream pipe and for the Belene plant, stating that “this is all part of Moscow’s acknowledged strategy to divide Europe from a geopolitical and energetic security point of view”. Jonathan Eyal, another British expert from the Royal United Services Institute, criticizes, in his turn, the lack of coordination and strategic outlook of the EU. “The problem is that, in a great measure, the legal framework for the EU states is established by the European Commission. The EU has not reached an agreement whether the energetic field is an ordinary or a strategic market, in which governments can play a role. We must have a closer connection between NATO and the EU but, unfortunately, the European Commission, that has a major say in this field, is not able to think strategically” he declared.

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