

REVIEW OF THE SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

POLICY BRIEF

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The recent Moldova's political developments, namely the presidential elections, the early parliamentary elections, are signalling an increased popular support for the fight against corruption, reform of the political class and the way out of the multiple crises i.e. health, economic, social, environmental and demographic. This desire for change also dictates a course of deep and systemic reform of state institutions, including the national security and defence sector.

This policy brief is assessing the outstanding issues and priorities to help advance a national strategic security sector review, including the reform of the National Army and the Security and Information Service, which should lead to development in the short to long run a set of laws and policy measures for the implementation of an integrated security and defence policy, harmonised with key foreign policy guidelines of the Republic of Moldova.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to launch, under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova, a comprehensive process of reconfiguration towards setting-up an integrated national security and defence system. But it is essential that this process is guided by the competent national authorities in charge for the national security and defence sectors, such as the Ministry of Defence and the Security and Information Service, which also need in the first place to be urgently reorganised and empowered themselves. A special role in this process is assigned to the military and traditional diplomacy, advanced strategic knowledge tools with a strong *intelligence* component, improved public awareness and increased level of security culture across the entire society.

In this respect, the security sector reform process needs to be inclusive and encompassing pro-reform political actors, competent national authorities, civil society, national experts, but also international partners supporting the key national actors with methodologies, expertise and necessary technical assistance. A step in this direction would be the creation by the President of the Republic of Moldova of a National Platform on security and defence issues assigned with the role to reflect, consult, and advance policy proposals for a comprehensive security sector reform, which will also include thematic consultative committees and interinstitutional working groups on issues such as external cooperation in the field of international security.

INTRODUCTION

The army and other types of militarized structures entered the 21st century with different set of needs and challenges than in the past. Certainly, the traditional role to defend the national sovereignty and territorial integrity remains a major task for any army. This is in particular relevant for Moldova's army, given the certain specific conditions the country faces. For years we have heard certain speculative arguments as those that our army is not capable of coping with any potential enemy or resisting against any military attack or aggression. All this cannot be any more seriously considered and must be rejected. In many cases, these narratives are intentionally promoted in the public discourse solely for the purpose to confuse the citizens. The army remains a crucial national actor to defend the territory, address civil emergencies, ensure the cyber defence and fight the information warfare.

A simple historical parallel tells us that any foreign military attack can and must be stopped at least for a certain period, winning time for the decision-makers to apply the entire arsenal of international diplomatic and political measures to stop or limit further external aggression. These principles are at the core of the defence strategies of other countries, comparable with the Republic of Moldova. Take for example, Finland, a neutral state, on the border with a much larger and stronger neighbour, which has developed serious military capabilities to ensure the ability to react to any kind of military aggression. In the case of the Republic of Moldova, similar risks are not necessarily related only to a potential direct conventional attack from an aggressor, but is rather shaped by *proxy hybrid war* interferences, also involving military actions of foreign troops illegally stationed on the territory of the country and armed forces of the unrecognized Transnistrian authorities. It is obvious that in these conditions the Moldova's military capabilities must be more efficient and better equipped than those on the left bank of the Nistru river. On the other hand, more and more states are realizing that defence starts beyond their borders. While the security means much more than the military's defence of the sovereignty and territorial integrity. Modern armed forces are required to be able to plan, support and implement a variety new roles, missions and functions, on top of those traditional ones for regular armies. Today, the armed forces receive new military and security tasks, such as implementation of stabilization, rescue-unblocking or anti-terrorist operations. Despite increased budgetary limitations, this requires that the armed forces are upgraded with military units and capabilities with an extraordinary degree of flexibility. Over the past decade, there were many attempts to address this challenge and answer the following questions: What kind of forces need to be developed to accomplish various missions? Should the army in some cases be replaced by other types of security force, such as the paramilitary police force for example? Is it necessary to maintain all types of capabilities at the national level or are there some ways to better streamline collective defence efforts?

The major global crisis caused by the rapid spread of the new type of coronavirus (Covid-19) has led the leaders of several countries to call on their armed forces to support a diverse range of roles. The armed forces were called to intervene with their capabilities and actions to manage crises situations different to those from the past. As the crisis intensified and the death toll increased, the armed forces were seen as a measure of last resort by state decision-makers. It is expected that these types of army interventions will continue to be used in the future, even if the current pandemic crisis will end. It will remain one of the key issues to be addressed on the national and international level. Today, more than ever, it is becoming increasingly clear that the public system and public institutions of the Republic of Moldova must be "refreshed", rebuilt, reformed, rethought and reset. Even if today, there is a high need to address the systemic shortcomings in the health sector and ensure economic development; even if politicians tend to prioritise the imperative justice reform or the fight against endemic corruption; one cannot afford to neglect, ignore or forget the dire need to address the traditional and hybrid risks to the national security and defence. Finally, it should not be overlooked that multiple crisis the country is going through, also provides for new opportunities, visions and a chance to make an effort towards long term development of the country.

MOLDOVA'S KEY SECURITY CHALLENGES

As we are on the edge of overpassing the turning point of the COVID-19 pandemic health crisis, the first lessons are emerging at a global level. The European Union made the first review of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the security and defence systems¹. It was done to assess the preparedness for possible new security consequences of the pandemic and address them in the future. The EU defence ministers concluded that the armed forces of the EU Member States play an essential role in tackling the pandemic by providing support to civilian authorities and cross-border assistance. Outside its borders, the EU continues to support partners, including in civilian and military missions and operations. Small states, which face economic, political, security and demographic challenges, such as the Republic of Moldova, cannot and will not be able to cope on their own. Hence the key questions to be answered are what geopolitical context can Moldova ensure a sufficient level of defence and security in accordance with its European aspirations? What security options should, or could Moldova take advantage of?

Unfortunately, Moldova has insufficiently used the international partnerships to strengthen its resilience against effects of multiple crisis. More or less similar to other autocratic, populist and illiberal regimes in our region, previous Moldovan governments used a bad habit of vehemently attacking the political opposition, civil society, the media, academia, groups and associations of experts.

Looking at the area of security and national defence sectors of the Republic of Moldova, there are already several laws and policy documents². But the policy framework needs to be revised to address outstanding factors affecting the national security system, such as endemic corruption, which has distorted and discredited even the good things that have been done, sowing distrust in people's minds and discouraging political will. Most laws, strategic policy documents and relevant implementation plans have been initiated, developed, promoted and monitored by civil society, academia, but also by members of parliament and relevant experts from political parties. Currently, there are plenty of academic studies and practical elaborations on the development of the security and defence system of the Republic of Moldova, of its armed forces, from the proclamation of independence to the present day. However, there is an urgent need to adopt a new approach both to the system set-up and operational policies. Key in this new approach should be the notion of security and defence sector reform, which in different periods of Moldova's development was understood differently by various political actors and civil servants. But the main challenge is that in the recent Moldova's history, few reforms have been fully implemented.

A NEED FOR A NEW SECURITY SYSTEM REFORM

The concept of security sector reform (SSR) has become important for decision-makers in Central and South-Eastern European countries and for the international community only in recent decades. Although the academic community has tried to define the term, it continues to be interpretable in certain respects. Attempts to define the concept of SSR were largely theoretical, deductive, and normative. One of the interpretations accepted by the UN is that security sector reform aims to create a secure environment for sustainable development, poverty reduction, good governance and the rule of law.³ It is based on the countries' ability to mitigate the vulnerabilities for its people via development and use of a range of policy tools to prevent and address security threats that affect the well-being of the society. The United Nations Security Council considers that the SSR is "critical to the consolidation of peace and stability, promoting poverty reduction, rule of law and good governance,

¹ COVID-19 -Lessons and Implications for EU Security and Defence. Brussels, 12/05/2020 - 15:53, UNIQUE ID: 200512_13

² NOTE: National Security Concept and Strategy; Cyber Security Strategy and Information Security Strategy; National defense strategy and military strategy; NATO-Republic of Moldova Partnership Individual Action Plan (IPAP).

³ <https://www.md.undp.org/content/moldova/ro/home/projects/Support-to-the-Security-Sector-Reform.html>

extending legitimate state authority, and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict".⁴ However, for the purpose of this brief, we will use an operational definition of the Geneva Center for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) that developed an empirical study on the security sector reform in Southeast Europe, under the Stability Pact. DCAF considers that the reform of the security system includes five elements: (1) *the reform is initiated by political leaders according to democratic principles*, (2) *the starting point is a broad consensus on the notion of security* (3) *the reform includes all national security institutions*, (4) *the reform is a continuous process* and (5) *reform focuses not only on structures but also on human resources*.⁵ It is absolutely clear that today this is the most recommendable approach to the reform in the context of the difficult situation in which the Republic of Moldova finds itself.

The current situation, therefore, dictates the need for a new national security and defence concept to be formulated by the new political leaders, in their aspiration to access power and govern Moldova. To answer the questions regarding the essence of the new Moldova's security and defence policy, it is imperative to review traditional and emerging issues, risks and threats, but also to identify the optimal formula and advance new topics of national interest, taking into account the latest developments and experiences in the field of national security.

Moreover, it is worth encouraging and promoting the process of strategic planning and modelling of a future defence and security policy, which shall include the terms of resilience to unconventional *hybrid, proxy and information wars*. This process shall anticipate the effects and impact of the development of *smart defence, artificial intelligence, outsourcing, cyber resilience and early warning* technologies. It is a special task not only for the authorities, officials from ministries and agencies, members of parliament, but also for civil society, academia, the community of experts and the media. Methodologically, the new strategic concepts of the leadership of the Republic of Moldova must be developed in consensus with the integrated European approach to foreign, security and defence policy. The Association Agreement with the European Union, but also the current framework for international cooperation in the field of defence and security with NATO and its Member States, creates important opportunities in this regard that must be seized.

A separate discussion should be held about Moldova's armed forces, the military component of the strategic policy documents, the National Army and the military security of the state. It is true that, unlike other former USSR states, which had combat-ready military formations on their territory and later transformed into national armed forces, the Republic of Moldova received under its jurisdiction, for the most part, military units, whose officers and the commanders refused to take an oath of allegiance to the new state. This led to the fact that the military units that passed under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Moldova were unfit in terms of combat capability, destination, strength, structure and place of deployment. The National Army started to build on new foundations, but using the technical-military capabilities of the former military units. Moreover, throughout this period, the process of creating the armed forces and the national defence system was not entirely based on concepts and programs in the field of national security and military construction in the state, responding to the fundamental interests of the state. The decisions for the military construction issues were developed by the Ministry of Defence, considering their own visions and concepts, without the direct participation of all the governing and administrative bodies of the state.

This fundamental discussion - what kind of armed forces serve best the Republic of Moldova - is still relevant today. In the past, there were performed various risk analysis, early warning and early conflict prevention reviews. Its results were partially reflected in all strategic defence policy documents with the view to have armed forces that would be capable to address major security threats and risks to the independence, sovereignty and integrity of the state. However, many politicians and experts in

⁴ Idem

⁵ Theodore Winkler. *Managing change. The reform and democratic control of the security sector and international order*. - in Security Sector Reform: Institutions, Society and Good Governance, edited by Bryden and Fluri (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2003).

the field (the vast majority of whom come from pro-Russian left parties and from nostalgic fellow citizens) challenged the need for a modern national army. A large part of these narratives is part of concerted actions promoted by propaganda campaigns aimed to weaken the state of the Republic of Moldova.

One of the most constant and subversive clichés of this kind is that "Moldova does not need an army, it has no one to fight with and we must disarm". These types of narratives are widespread since Moldova's independence by various political parties, opinion makers and media, generously funded from obscure funding. But one shall not forget that the Republic of Moldova is among the group of states with the lowest military expenditures on several relevant indicators such as their share in the budget and GDP. Data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on global military spending since 2019, shows clearly that Moldova is in the group countries with the lowest defence spending. Out of the 143 states for which data are available, Moldova is placed fourth at the bottom of the ranking in terms of the share of military spending in the GDP (0.38%) and second at the bottom in terms of budget expenditures (1.11%).⁶ Although we perform better in terms of military spending per capita (\$11), we are still one of the 20 countries that allocate the least resources for the army and national defence.

Finally, the reform of the security sector calls for the need to develop and explore the system of international agreements and cooperation with NATO and its partners, with a special focus on relations with Romania and Ukraine, but of course also with the US and Western European states that can provide political, diplomatic, strategic and defence support in the case of a larger strategic security threats against Moldova.

It is well known that the rapprochement with the EU and the implementation of Moldova's commitments under the Association Agreement are an essential to the component of national security as well. Unfortunately, Moldova's credibility with the EU has dropped massively due to lack of reforms and stagnation. In this respect, a major effort is needed to increase the credibility of the Moldovan authorities in relation to its external partners and their own citizens. This can only be achieved by accelerating reforms, promoting and supporting a new pro-reform political elite. The fight against corruption, the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law are key conditions for ensuring Moldova's economic security and unblock its relations with the EU. The EU could move further away from Moldova, as it no longer accepts the vicious governance model practiced in the recent years in the country. The current Defence Strategy stipulates that the EU's Global Foreign and Security Policy Strategy, designed to create a pan-European system, is of particular importance to both Member States and partners, opening new opportunities for cooperation.⁷ In the years to come, these intentions and opportunities must be fully exploited and implemented, making this a very important step towards full integration into the European Union.⁸

Likewise, relations with Romania are extremely important in terms of European integration, military and security cooperation, Moldova being today on the border with the EU and NATO. During the pandemic crisis, Romania has once again demonstrated that it is the most important partner, which can provide unconditional and immediate assistance to the Republic of Moldova.

In the nearest future, it will also be necessary to make the most of Moldova relations with NATO, in particular exploring the support for strengthening defence capabilities, reform and train the Army and national security structures. The partnership with NATO is focused on identifying and using all viable

⁶ https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-04/fs_1904_milex_2018.pdf

⁷ About these opportunities see in: Viorel Cibotaru. *Concept of a European Security and Defence Union (ESDU)*, in: *Challenges, risks and threats for security in Europe. 11th Network Europe Conference Warsaw, 19th-22nd May 2019*. EIZ Publishing, Zurich, Switzerland, 2019, 209 p.

⁸ About ways to benefit in relations with the EU on the ESDP dimension see here: George Vlad Niculescu, Grazvydas Jasutis, Kakha Gogolashvili, Viorel Cibotaru, Hans-Jurgen Zahorka. *The Consolidation of Inter-Institutional Cooperation and Communication Mechanism on CSDP-related matters. Case Study: Republic of Moldova. Public Study Report*. Bruxelles, 2017.: file:///C:/Users/user/Documents/Din%20comp%20PLDM/diverse%202017/hqstep_csdp_public_report_md_final.pdf

mechanisms to strengthen the state's defence capacity. The key objectives of the new security architecture needs are reflected in the updated bilateral cooperation framework i.e. the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) Moldova-NATO and The Partnership Analysis and Review Process (PARP). From the list of security arguments, which condition and reflect the degree of strengthening of this partnership, it is worth mentioning Moldova's participation in the two initiatives "Interoperability Platform" and "Defence Capacity Building Initiative", proposed by the Alliance at the NATO Summit in Wales (4-5 September 2014) and approved in May 2015. No less important is the deployment of the national contingent to the NATO KFOR Mission in Kosovo, which is possible thanks to the support of the governments of Italy and the US.⁹ The Partnership for Peace will remain the strong point of the Alliance's policy towards partners. Although its potential needs to be fully explored and implemented more effectively. Thus, the PfP's contribution to the security and defence reform process in the Republic of Moldova has been and should continue to be extremely important for the Ministry of Defence.

Another pillar in the reform action of the Republic of Moldova is the Strategic Dialogue with the US. On August 29, 2019, former prime-minister Maia Sandu said at a meeting with John Bolton, the US President's adviser on national security: "The United States is a strategic partner for our country, and the strengthening and modernization of the security and defence sector have a direct impact on ensuring the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova."¹⁰

On January 17, 2020, the United States and the Republic of Moldova stressed, in a meeting in Chisinau, reconfirmed the commitment of both states to deepen their cooperation in the field of rule of law and combating high-level corruption in the Republic of Moldova. The United States and the Republic of Moldova have agreed to cooperate in five specific areas for strengthening the rule of law and good governance: (a) carrying out significant reforms in the justice sector, (b) strengthening anti-corruption institutions, (c) promoting the media and free and active civil societies, (d) improving government transparency and protecting human rights for all citizens. The United States and the Republic of Moldova reaffirmed their continued commitment to deepen the bilateral partnership and to continue working together to fight corruption, protect independent institutions and establish the impartial justice that the people of the Republic of Moldova deserve.¹¹

⁹ More details about the 25-year cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and NATO can be found here: Dr. Viorel Cibotaru. *Moldova-NATO Relations in 25 Years – A Brief Overview*. In: *Changing security dynamics of Black Sea and Caspian Basin countries in light of their Partnership policy with NATO and other international players*. Istanbul, 2019, 116 p.

¹⁰ <https://gov.md/ro/content/premierul-maia-sandu-la-intrevederea-cu-john-bolton-consilierul-presedintelui-sua-pentru>

¹¹ <https://www.zdg.md/stiri/stiri-justitie/sua-si-r-moldova-au-convenit-sa-coopereze-in-cinci-domenii-specifice-pentru-consolidarea-statului-de-drept-si-a-bunei-guvernari/>

CONCLUSIONS

Given Moldova's strategic objective to develop its minimum military capabilities, the country needs an integrated national defence and security strategy to counter a potential military attack and discourage any armed aggression, in the medium and to long run. At the same time, in the short-term Moldova should fully explore the potential of the regional cooperation framework with Ukraine and Georgia, international cooperation with the EU and the US, as well as the potential of partnership relations with NATO to assess risks, increase capabilities to counter possible security threats, conventional and hybrid military interference.

Consequently, in the first phase, it is crucial to invest in a complex, modern and sophisticated security sector review process, to improve the anticipation of the movements of the potential adversary, in parallel with building Moldova's resilience against various external attacks and interferences targeting the national security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. This involves rethinking the structure of the National Army. Making it more flexible and adapted to the challenges and needs of the 21st century; optimising its capabilities and staff to be ready to use and apply modern technology to defend Moldova's territory, its citizens and state's integrity.

Beyond the urgent need to address the challenge of weakened democratic institutions, affected by the kleptocratic system and *proxy* actors controlled from abroad, main challenge of the review and modernization process of Moldova's security and defence sector is the scarce financial and human resources. This is also relevant for the objective to ensure a minimum formula for the military forces and capabilities to counter any kind of hostile military action and hybrid aggression. That is why, Moldova needs first of all a rigorous audit process of the national security and defence system to allow the identification of the structural, financial, operational and institutional needs in the short, medium and long run.

The action calls for the launch, under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova, a comprehensive process of reconfiguration towards setting-up an integrated national security and defence system. But it is essential that this process is guided by the competent national authorities in charge for the national security and defence sectors, such as the Ministry of Defence and the Security and Information Service, which also need in the first place to be urgently reorganised and empowered themselves. A special role in this process is assigned to the military and traditional diplomacy, advanced strategic knowledge tools with a strong *intelligence* component, improved public awareness and increased level of security culture across the entire society. In this respect, the security sector reform process needs to be inclusive and encompassing pro-reform political actors, competent national authorities, civil society, national experts, but also international partners supporting the key national actors with methodologies, expertise and necessary technical assistance.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following key general and specific recommendations are proposed to be considered in the next period for the review and reform of the national security and defence sector of the Republic of Moldova. All these proposals do not contradict the country's neutrality status. On the contrary, strengthening of the state's defence capabilities, including via closer cooperation with the international development partners, is a key condition for ensuring and respecting the neutrality of the Republic of Moldova.

I. General recommendations:

- Moldova should fully explore the potential of its relations with NATO and the EU within the existing partnership frameworks and agreements aimed at strengthening defence capabilities, reform and train the National Army, increasing resilience and capabilities to identify and respond to conventional and hybrid interference, reform and empowering the national intelligence and security system.
- Strengthening the cooperation with the USA in the process of security sector review is key. Moldova should negotiate the set-up of a special in the Strategic Dialogue with the USA focused on strengthening the defence and security cooperation.
- The new security and defence strategic framework should include the aim to further strength the cooperation with other countries in the region, members, and aspirants to become NATO members. In this respect, Moldova needs to strengthen its security and defence partnerships with Ukraine and Georgia, countries that today are more advanced in terms of policies, capabilities, and experience in the defence and security sector. The EU associated status of all three countries provides for an extensive framework and opportunities related to strengthening resilience, cyber security, and contracting hybrid interference.
- Moldova should strengthen and expand its Strategic Defence Partnership with Romania, in particular by:
 - a) concluding a bilateral agreement on mutual assistance in case of direct hostile actions against the Republic of Moldova of a terrorist, hybrid, cybernetic or other nature;
 - b) creating joint conventional military forces (at battalion, then brigade level), such as the Poland-Ukraine battalions (POLUKRBAT) or the joint brigade created by Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine (LITPOLUKRBRIG);
 - c) extending, strengthening and institutionalizing relations on the dimension of civil protection and creating joint units;
 - d) creating joint units (fleets) in the Danube delta, in double subordination - of the Ministry of Defence and Border Police, with mixed military / civilian missions;
 - e) developing relations in the field of defence industry (especially with the state company ROMTEHNICA), creating joint enterprises to produce ammunition and repair of military equipment.
- Setting-up by the President of the Republic of Moldova of a National platform on security and defence issues assigned with the role to reflect, consult, and advance policy proposals for a comprehensive security sector reform, which will also include thematic consultative committees and interinstitutional working groups on issues such as international cooperation in the field of international security. This platform would also aim to educate the new class of politicians, activists from NGOs and private associations, young researchers, and journalists on key issues in the security sector. Here is a list of potential issues, topics, key assertions that could be a explored within the platform:
 - a) The "frozen" conflict in the eastern region of the Republic of Moldova - the settlement of the so-called Transnistrian conflict. Finding and effectively implementing sustainable solutions for conflict settlement is the key element of the process of reintegration of the country and finalizing the construction of the modern state of the Republic of Moldova. A

new strategic vision should contain clear formulas for these solutions, regardless of their short- or medium-term feasibility. Alternatively, there may be a minimum settlement plan, but which must contain the element of withdrawal of Russian troops.

- b) Advancing Moldova's European integration, diversification and enhancing the Euro-Atlantic cooperation at the limit of the interpretation of the constitutional notion of "permanent neutrality".
- c) Overcoming the identity-territorial division, improving the legal framework for the functioning of Gagauz autonomy, harmonizing the process of national emancipation with respect for linguistic and cultural diversity.
- d) The efficient completion of the profound reform of the justice system, the elimination of the practices of impunity on the big cases of corruption and money laundering of treason in the interest of other states, etc.
- e) Reset, reform or set-up new institutions in the security sector: domestic, state security, fight against corruption and organised crime, counterespionage.

II. Specific recommendations:

On defence dimension (military):

- Once a new functional government will be appointed by a pro-reform majority in the Parliament, initiate the process of *Strategic Evaluation of the National Security and Defence Sector, adoption of a National Security Strategy, review and update the National Defence Strategy and other sector strategies* (i.e. military strategy, cyber security strategy, information security strategy, ecological, economic, food, energy, etc.). The major objectives of this policy exercise should be (a) to strengthen the resilience against external and internal security threats; (b) to defend the territory in cooperation with the other law enforcement institutions of the state for a set period of time (this as a level of ambition); (c) long-term territorial defence through cooperation with allied states (hence the need for the alliance system); (d) participation in external missions for training and interoperability; (e) to strengthen the circle of allies needed for self-defence.
- Effective modernization of the National Army, based on international cooperation (multilateral and bilateral), separate multiannual programs for modernization that should target not only new and traditional military missions, but also topics virtually non-existent in the public space, such as:
 - a) the structure and composition of the National Army;
 - b) the dislocation, accommodation and living conditions of the conscripts and contracted military staff;
 - c) equip the army with weapons and military equipment in line with international standards;
 - d) enhance training capabilities and combat exercises of the military staff;
 - e) develop the interoperability of the military of the national army, of the *carabinieri* troops, of the special subdivisions within the penitentiary system and of the Security and Information Service.
 - f) the status of the military, the place and role of the military in society;
 - g) the constitutional rights and obligations of citizens regarding defence in line with national and European values;
 - h) the participation of the Moldovan military in peacekeeping operations and missions abroad.

On the dimension of cyber security:

- Develop the concept, capabilities and train staff for the operation of the Cyber Security, Cyber Defence and Cyber Governance system.
- Operational consolidation of the national CERT;

- Establish and operationalise an independent coordination body on cyber security bringing together representatives of national security actors i.e MoIA, SIS, STISC (CERT-GOV-MD), MoEI, e-Government Agency, MFAEI.
- Establish public-private partnerships to strengthen the cooperation among service providers and/or critical infrastructure at the state level and assist the state where relevant in maintaining national integrity and security.
- Development of an early warning mechanism to assist the decision-making process at the level of the country's political leadership (Presidency, Parliament and Government) in matters of national security.

On the intelligence dimension:

- The main objective of intelligence services in democratic societies is to protect the national security and fundamental values of an open society. The reform of the intelligence sector should aim not only at the restructuring of the Security and Information Service, but also at the development of the state's institutional ability to anticipate the actions of opponents and to fight them effectively.
- The main challenge in the process of transforming the intelligence community is the response to change, which should ensure the strengthening of the efficiency of intelligence missions. In this sense, it is necessary to integrate innovation with the other components that ensure the efficiency of information activity i.e. strategy, doctrine, organization, leadership, education, practice and technology. It is also important to use unconventional common and high-performance technology in parallel with the cultural transformation process.
- The purpose of intelligence transformation is to provide decision-makers with an effective early warning system, adequate and evidence-based intelligence for the decision-making process as well as and the flexibility, asymmetric defensive and offensive capabilities necessary to respond to the current and future security threats.
- A particular direction of the reform of the intelligence sector is the development and improvement of the Security and Information Service surveillance mechanisms, redefining the demarcation line between the law enforcement and criminal investigation services, on one side and the intelligence and counter-intelligence services on the other. Public control is a way to ensure public accountability for intelligence decisions and actions. It aims to prevent abuse of power, expose the exercise of intrusive powers and achieve a better outcome after an assessment of specific actions. The general consensus, taken from a report by the Venice Commission and other academic studies, is that public control should be a combination of (a) executive control, (b) parliamentary oversight, (c) bodies of experts and (d) judicial control.

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The Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE) was established in March 2015 as an independent, non-profit and non-partisan think-tank. IPRE's Mission is to accelerate the European integration of the Republic of Moldova by promoting systemic reforms, enhancing participatory democracy and strengthening the role of citizens in national and local decision-making processes.

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