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## Article

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## Improving security governance through cohesive prevention policies in the European Union

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### Abstract

*Security governance plays an extremely important role in achieving basic stability; every geopolitical context wants to maintain and to perpetuate. the security objective must be perceived both as a sine qua non in insuring current needs, as well as a means to ensure well-drafted mitigation plans for future challenges. The multilevel governance framework must continually focus on emerging threat factors, fast-moving changes in the landscape, people's views and behavior and, perhaps most importantly upon the cultural transformations. The purpose of this paper is to assess the importance of preventive policies and, at the same time, to show how they can lead to good governance. Furthermore, we would like to advance the efficiency of a threat assessment guide on behalf of European institutions, whether there is a clear tool kit commonly put into action, and last but not least, if the instruments of cooperation that these institutions have in their portfolio are enough to forge a strong prevention mechanism. As a result, we will eventually try to demonstrate that decision-makers need to understand the importance of preventive policies and how they can be developed and used to optimize resources and improve development, progress and efficiency, regardless of areas.*

**Keywords:** security governance, prevention policies, risk management

### Introduction

Security governance activities involve the development, institutionalization, assessment and improvement of risk management and security policies. Governance of security includes determining how various actors (political actors, organizations, states) should work together to prevent certain threats. Also, the development and sustainment of security governance often involves conducting threat, vulnerability and risk analysis tests that are specific to the local, regional or global environment.

Security paradigms are changing and global vulnerabilities are raised to new levels through globalization, creating new governance strategies at local, national and international levels (Ballantine, 2003). In this context, security discourses introduce and accept notions such as anticipatory risk assessment, preemptive application in internal and external security environments,

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and widespread use of surveillance tools for proactive monitoring of movements, transactions, etc. (de Goede, 2008).

Our analysis although it is not holistic, it perceives prevention as a central piece in a risk management strategy especially because it creates the opportunity for cooperation among states and organizations with different views and sometimes opposing interests.

Thus, the impetus of this study is given by the dynamics of the concept of prevention and the role that this concept has or ought to have in policies developed at European, national, regional and local levels. The study's objectives are summarized in the following research questions: How are preventive policies found in the broader agenda of security studies? How can security governance be improved with these policies and what are the best solutions for optimizing resources? What is the technical toolkit that determines sustainable and sustainable risk management policies in relation to the benchmark, quality standards and procedural requirements imposed by the EU?

In order to meet our objectives and to answer the research questions, in the first part we will try to give an idea of what the concept of security means and to highlight the changes in the field of security analysis. In the second part, we will discuss governance and security governance while highlighting the importance of risk management in policy-making and decision-making. The third part of this study is dedicated to preventive security policies and we will try to show, after a brief definition of the concept of "prevention", how these policies are applied in the national security strategy. Last but not least, the final section is dedicated to the conclusions.

## **1. Changes in security strategies**

Often, when we talk about security, we assume that we are well informed and understand what security is and what it is. Theoreticians of international studies and security studies have tried to define the main meaning of the term "security" (Wolfers, 1952; Buzan, 1991; Baldwin, 1997; Ullman (1983). However, in the context of increasing globalization and interdependencies between different domains, the concept of security and its constituent elements have undergone, over time, essential changes as well as the attitude of states towards ways of transposing it into life, in relation to changes taking place internationally.

One of the most well-known and old definitions of security belong to Arnold Wolfers: "security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, and in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked" (Wolfers, 1952).

The second definition of security highlights "social security refers to the ability of a society to preserve its essential characteristics in the face of varying circumstances and in spite of potential or

real threats" (Hough, 2004). Social security is compromised when a community perceives a threat to its identity, identity being defined as a set of ideas and practices that identify certain individuals as members of a social group. Thus, cultural transformations and, more importantly, identity as a focal point of international politics, has become increasingly important through the harmonizing pressures of a globalized world and the extension of international civil and human rights that recognize the right to self-expression / self-determination.

William Bloom proposes an identity theory stating that "in order to achieve psychological security, each individual possesses an inwardness of internalization, identifying with the behavior, habits and attitudes of significant figures in his social environment, that is, people are actively seeking strengthen and protect identity. "

Both, the socio-constructivist school and the classical school of Paris studies, recognizing the power of systems of beliefs and collective values, help develop the interest in questions about collective identity and social security. The only difference between these is the degree of variability of self-attributed perceptions by the fact that the latter sees the ethnic security dilemmas between groups as the most problematic while the former recognizes the malleability of perceptions that generate conflicts between groups. This distinction is relevant because it also shows how social security conflicts can be modified, reduced or securitized if some organizations have a comparative advantage because their approach is most reflected in the mechanisms by which the security of society can be achieved.

The end of the Cold War and the end of the conflict between two superpowers left behind a void that was then filled with previously neglected and marginalized aspects that led to new approaches to security studies. Unlike traditional approaches, which mostly focus on military threats typically originating from other states, the new vision implies a broader security concept. The new way of security analysis and thinking has arisen in connection with the end of the Cold War with the publication of "People, States and Fear" by Barry Buzan, who presents a range of international post-war security studies." With reference to the required security, Buzan examines the types of security threats and describes the five broad sectors: military, political, social, economic and environmental, supporting the multilateral approach to security while maintaining a realistic paradigm with a considerable description of the nature of security.

Buzan also describes the security of society as an identity concept: "Concerns about social security, traditional language patterns, culture, religious and national identity, and habits must be maintained at a satisfactory level of development" (Buzan, 1991, p.19). The definition of social security offered by Buzan emphasizes that the threats, in terms of the identity of society, are more likely to be within society than from outside (Buzan, 1991, p. 123). Barry Buzan uses the state as a

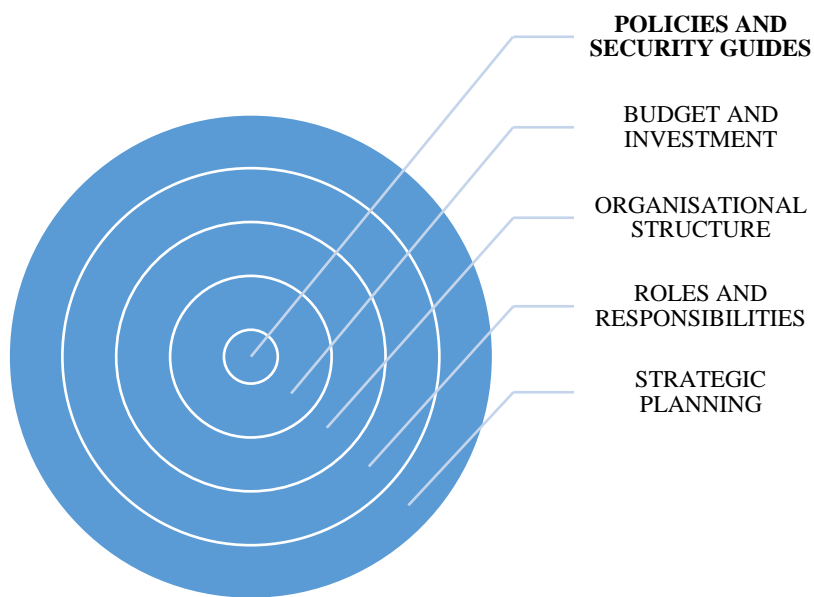
starting point in his analysis, the state being the main actor in security policy and its correlation with individuals, groups, societies, other states, and the international system as a whole. Extending the interest of national security in the field of social security results from the role of the contemporary democratic state, whose duty is to take care of its citizens, regardless of their material status, in order to allow them to take part in social life. For instance, taking into account massive flows of refugees and illicit migration flows, they undermine states' ability to control the borders, and states deal with the following compromises on migration management: through co-operation between states they have to harmonize policies and share information, and then they have to give up a certain degree of autonomy. By eroding, or by perceiving the erosion of the cultural basis of national identity, international migration may favor "the insecurity of society (Waever, 1993, pp. 17-40).

There are close links between security and the conditions for creating interrelations, welfare, liberalizing the economy and consolidating democracy. The main analysis tool uses the sectors that denote the specific logic and the type of interaction between units. For these purposes, the military sector refers to power relations, political sector relations to relations with local authorities, the economic sector to economic relations, the environmental sector to the relationship between man and nature, and the social sector to the relations between social groups. As mentioned above, due to interdependencies, all these sectors overlap and affect each other. As such, considering that most security issues involve a combination of more security sectors in the real world, the analysis needs to be integrated. Globalization can and must be seen as a major factor contributing to the change of the security paradigm as well as to the ongoing change in security strategies. One of the main features of security globalization is combining global threats with local fears.

## **2. Security governance - policy formulation and decision making**

Governance is the assignment of decision-making rights and a framework of responsibility to encourage the desired behavior in decision-making. Security governance needs to provide a framework in which decisions on security issues are aligned with the EU's overall strategy. When it comes to security governance, literature in the field highlights the need to delegate authority and accountability to security responsible actors, thus allowing flexibility in developing appropriate measures to better protect critical points. In the decision-making process, perception is the first step followed by analysis that takes into account the perception and purpose of policy decisions (Brooks, 2011, p. 150). Thus, security governance is linked to intrinsic decision-making, and it is intended to establish directions, set standards and principles, and to focus on prioritizing and directing investment.

**Figure 1. Security Governance**



Source: author's representation

Essentially, security governance is the process of developing programs, guides, and security policies that respond appropriately to strategic needs identified through risk and threat assessments. It can be seen as a target where focal points are security policies and guides (Figure 1). Then, in order to reach these policies or guides (decision-making), we must begin with strategic planning, continuing with the roles and responsibilities granted or delegated, and creating the organizational structure, and last but not least, with the budget allocated to reach the target.

In recent years, the relationship between the central government and local authorities has undergone transformation. Therefore, the general evolution of the status of local governments in the direction of public policies has also entered the field of security through the development by municipalities of a new approach to addressing issues such as insecurity. Territorial authorities are no longer regarded as mere communication links between the central government and local communities. For example, in the development strategy of Cluj-Napoca "safety is a basic element for the good functioning and development of the local community. One of the most important obligations of the state is to ensure the security of the citizens, both on the territorial administrative area and abroad, according to the legal norms." (The development strategy of Cluj-Napoca 2014-2020). Also, in this strategy is the establishment of a system for identifying and evaluating the problems security and public order, managed by a local structure, the establishment of a joint operational center for managing security, safety and public order issues, including: Cluj-Napoca City Hall, County Police, Local Police, Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, The Gendarmerie, The Romanian Intelligence Service, The National Defense Ministry. It consists of a "combination of symbolic power, cultural

authority and public legitimacy, public security services" facilitating access to information sources together.

Global developments and external structural constraints have forced the EU to change its institutional structure so that it can develop its long-term planning, policy coordination and strategic vision. With the new emerging global order, the EU has entered a world of uncertainty, since "the future of developments remains uncertain". Thus, not only crisis management capacity, but also anticipatory capacity and risk management are increasingly important. As a consequence, the EU needs to strengthen its anticipation and adaptation capability over the next decade in all core policies. Given that "the EU must become strategic", global risk management and anticipatory capacity have become the greatest potential for political power: "Political power derives from the effective management of the risks and challenges that have strayed into our homes and lives: energy security, climate change, financial crisis, demographic change, migration, care systems and social security" (Bauer and Baumann, 2009).

Risk is a complex concept, and in recent years great progress has been made in all key risk areas: hazard, exposure and vulnerability. Risk definition, and in particular risk assessment, are key indicators for action and control decisions. Generally speaking, a security risk can be identified by threats that could exploit one or more vulnerabilities. Once the threat is identified, the risk can be assessed in two directions, namely the likelihood of its occurrence and its impact. The probability and impact assessments are based on the same indicators as those used to identify or measure threats and vulnerabilities. As mentioned above, it is impossible to accurately calculate the risk, but it can be evaluated, for example, as small, medium or large. To make this risk assessment, knowledge, statistics and other endogenous and exogenous factors are generally used, which should generally be sufficient to present and calculate a risk.

When we talk about risk management then we have to follow the following principles (MSG-Management study guide):

- All political decisions at central and local level are taken with prior information and risk acceptance involved;
- The risk management policy should provide for continuous improvement and protection, to take into account the appearance of the black swan and the possible resulting losses;
- All involved must be informed of the risks in their respective areas and of their mitigation measures;
- Risk mitigation measures adopted either at central or local level must be effective in the long term and, as far as possible, be integrated at all decision levels;



- Levels of tolerance at risk levels need to be reviewed and analyzed on a regular basis, thus being consistent with security and development strategies;
- The emergence, evolution and management of risks will be promptly reported;

Nowadays, due to the wealth of existing information, a key challenge for decision-makers addressing risk management is to capitalize on the wealth of knowledge at all levels - local, national, European and global. This whole process of understanding the risks is not a simple one and the data, although accessible, may be partial or erroneous. Moreover, discrepancies in data quality are sometimes argued to delay risk analysis and modeling, but it is infinitely better to launch an evaluation process from the outset on the basis of existing or incomplete data and to analyze the risks than to wait until the data is updated. Risk assessments and risk models are designed to inform decision makers to make informed decisions and to create and implement targeted and effective policies.

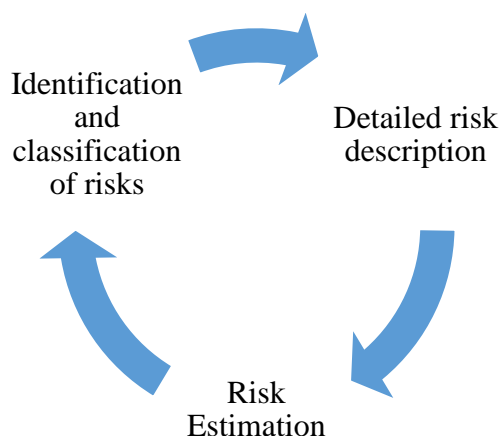
To improve all stages of the risk management cycle, such as impact prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery after impact, information and knowledge needs to be continually improved, account must be taken of progress in relevant technologies and the results of applied research and the interaction between researchers and end users improved

Understanding and applying policies relevant to risk management can help in strengthening the link between information owners (risk assessors, information analysts, researchers) and policy decision makers, and improving your prevention and mitigation, training, response and recovery strategy. A very important role in risk management has the risk communication aspect being extremely relevant for decision-makers, practitioners and citizen. The purpose of risk communication is to prevent and mitigate the damage, to prepare citizens from vulnerable areas before an event occurs and to validate, disseminate corroborate information from different sources at the time of the event and in the recovery phase. The EU uses risk communication as an integrated element of the risk management process. There is some direct communication between the EU and the citizens of the Member States through directives that are transposed by national governments.

The risk management process involves several stages (MSG-Management study guide):

- **The risk assessment** process is, in principle, a cyclical process that requires continuous attention because, on the one hand, the threats are constantly changing and on the other hand the risks already assessed must be kept within acceptable limits. This assessment process has three main steps: risk identification and classification, detailed risk description and risk estimation (probability, impact, and possible policies or preventive measures) (please see Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Risk assessment**

Source: author's representation

As far as the identification of risks is concerned, they can be divided into:

- **Strategic risks** are typically influenced by external events and trends (such as government policies, or changing stakeholder requirements);
- **Internal risks** these risks are associated with impediments to the development of policies and strategies (the interests and influence of third parties in targeting certain policies);
- **Operational or procedural risks**, these risks are associated with uncertainties about the implementation of risk management procedures or security strategies at national, regional or local level.
- **Risk Description**, a more accurate description of the risk helps to understand the nature, the amount of risk and its possible impact as well as identifying possible measures to be taken for mitigation.
- **Risk Estimation** in this process, the consequences of the events resulting from the materialization of risk must be quantified by the worst case scenario. For threats that cannot be prevented, a response strategy must be established that minimizes damage.

The impact of disasters has increased significantly in recent years, partly as a result of climate change, rapid and unplanned urbanization, changes in population structures and environmental degradation (European Commission 2014). The European Union needs a set of complex objectives with a clear vision and implementation must be managed by a type of meta-governmental institution. A governance initiative was launched in early 2009, clearly presenting the complexity of governance: "The Council recognizes the multidimensional nature of governance, including political, social, economic, security, legal, institutional, cultural and environmental issues, at all levels. All these

aspects are interconnected and should be addressed in a holistic and balanced way” (Council of the European Union, 1 December 2009 15265/1/09).

The Europe 2020 Strategy has brought a new declaration on the EU mission and will lead to the rejuvenation of the EU through the new Strategic Program. The governance line of the Europe 2020 strategy must be taken into account from a long-term perspective of EU institutionalization. Integrating Community and national levels as a radical reform of the governance line is one of the main prerequisites for the success of the Europe 2020 strategy: "Open method of coordination has failed as an instrument because it does not provide effective control, ie the mechanism for common objectives. The current state of play allows the Member States to integrate European objectives into national interests, thus making a policy based on the changing situation in the field. Without a solid and binding coordination, macroeconomic management at European level will be pursued in vain, combined with a new way of cooperation - actually depends on it" (Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013).

Often, the EU's ability to formulate common positions and exert influence focuses on traditional areas of foreign, security and defense policy. However, difficulties are encountered in the development of common positions due to the fact that Member States remain protected from national sovereignty. No country can be fully prepared for all kinds of disasters, it cannot cope with the risks alone but must act together through a coordinated joint response. Decision makers and those responsible for risk management in EU policies rely increasingly on knowledge and information at all levels - local, national, European and global - and apply them at all stages of the cycle: prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

The European Union consultation processes aim to understand the concerns of stakeholders before legislators can relate policies in the field of risk management. Upon conclusion of the consultations, the Commission develops legislative proposals on risk management from the information gathered and analyzing the current state of the risks or the uncertainty. The Explanatory Memorandum is then drawn up which accompanies any legislative proposal that is passed on to decision-makers in the European Parliament and the Council, with the role of providing policy-makers with a clear picture of the reasoning for which such action is needed. Information on hazards, risks and uncertainties is part of the justification for the regulatory activity provided to the governments of the Member States, citizens and other stakeholders.

### **3. Preventive security policies**

Prevention is seen as a good thing even more, while it refers to areas of particular importance to security, it becomes more attractive, including from a political point of view. Thus, prevention is

often used in political discourse and has a determining role in securing a certain problem. For example, in the recent period, due to the increased emphasis on radicalization, terrorism and organized crime, it has gradually prepared the way for proactive and preventive engagement using monitoring as a regular means of controlling human behavior.

The dictionary defines the prevention “of taking all necessary precautions to avoid something happening or avoiding harm through timely action”. For example, when we talk about environmental policies, the goal is to prevent the deterioration and protection of natural resources so that the environment can continue to support human wellbeing not only now but also for future generations.

Environmental prevention policies include measures to protect forests, stimulate the circular economy based on re-use and recycling of materials instead of disposal, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate climate change. In terms of economic policies and strategies, one objective is to prevent the types of malfunctions that can lead to the emergence of crises: over-indebtedness of consumers, non-performing loans, global speculation through complex financial instruments, etc. In this case, effective regulation and monitoring of financial / banking institutions to reduce speculation can be seen as a preventive measure.

“Prevention is a product of modernity, being linked to well-being and the authority of professional and scientific expertise” (Freeman, 1999, pp. 232-241). Prevention policies are built on two fundamental pillars the first of which is that of scientific research on cause and effect and prediction and the second aspect, as I mentioned above, the prevention policy involves some controlled intervention in social life and an acceptance of this situation.

Nowadays, security strategies are constantly updated and are now focusing on the merger between internal and external security. Therefore, there is an interconnection between different approaches within the different security strategies that have been developed at local, national and international level.

Looking at the national state level within the European Union, it is interesting to analyze the argumentation of the prevention from the National Security Strategies. For example, Romania, in *The National Defense Strategy* of the country, argues that the international landscape has changed, that the global paradigm shift is characterized by several developments and that the need to extend the concept of national security is also motivated by ensuring the convergence with the European security principles developed in the European Security Strategy and the Internal Security Strategy of the European Union, where security and development are placed in a direct proportionality relationship. Moreover, the document recognizes and presents a significant change in the security landscape, where national security cannot be individually secured by any state, the new challenges of the security environment requiring effective and operative collaboration within international cooperation

mechanisms and partnerships. It also refers to the national security objectives and directions that aim to strengthen national military and civilian capabilities to standards that allow prevention, deterrence and defense against any aggressive actions against our country as well as risk prevention, countering threats and limiting vulnerability.

Therefore, switching to early (preventative) interventions, even beyond national borders, is visible: "Providing mechanisms for preventing and counteracting cyber-attacks on information infrastructures of strategic interest associated with promoting national and international interests in the field of cyber security" (National Defense Strategy for the period 2015-2019). Moreover, these National Security Strategies observe the spread of security threats and attempt to establish an integrated risk assessment and a multi-agency approach. Several vital interests, especially territorial, economic, environmental, ecological and socio-economic, are identified. In addition, these strategies attempt to build a forward-looking forecast over a certain time horizon, based on risk assessment and scenario creation, while making them compatible with international security strategies.

The EU Security Strategy supports an integrated approach with a prominent position in the field of prevention. The main threats identified by the Security Strategy are largely identified in the National Security Strategies: terrorism and violent religious extremism; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including the proliferation of missile technology; regional conflicts; and organized crime. The EU Security Strategy also proposes "Joint Actions" based on joint identification and joint risk assessment: Sharing information between Member States and EU partners is therefore strongly promoted. The merger between internal and external security appears to prepare the context for increased focus on extraterritorial engagement, in combination with an early intervention doctrine.

All decision-makers and actors in the security sphere, whether acting at national or international level, seem to have devised a preventive strategy who offers them legitimate arguments to proactively intervene, meaning that intervention beyond their own territory is considered necessary to protect their own security. Prevention is influenced by ideas and ideologies by opinion groups on what governments and policy makers can do and should do. These ideological predispositions and paradigm conflicts form the objectives, the sphere and the nature of the preventive strategies. Moreover, the development of security policies often hides different interests. These include lobby groups, dominant economic actors, and trade union representatives.

## Conclusions

Throughout history, the approach to peace, stability and security has been dominated by the reaction to the conflict, and it has proved difficult to persuade decision-makers to invest in prevention.

Furthermore, the OECD in the Fragility Report of 2016 sets out: "ODA is focused on the symptom rather than the factors and the root causes of fragility". Contributors are advised to "invest in prevention" because (...) prevention saves lives, resources and money."

Focusing on treatment rather than on problem prevention has proved to be totally ineffective, at least in the short or medium term and especially in the context of developing countries. Prevention is not just a moral imperative for international bodies. Prevention is also a very important aspect from the perspective of development, progress and efficiency regardless of the areas.

The purpose of investing in preventive security policies is to mitigate or prevent risks by allocating resources through an integrated, continuous, multiannual and rigorous planning process to develop appropriate systems for timely discovery of hazards, risks and threats, with a view to preventing their production through the combined use of both military and civilian instruments.

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