

## ***CHANGES IN THE ROMANIAN MILITARY HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM. AN ANALYSIS IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION***

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*Abstract: As a part of the national higher education system, the military higher education system has known after 1989 a continuous and dynamic process of restructuration and modernization with greater openness toward the fields of social and economic sciences.*

*The article shows the results of analyzing the evolution of Romanian military institutions of higher education among Romanian education as a whole and in the context of integration into the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union.*

*The institutional changes in the analyzed period have generated new targets for military institutions of higher education in Romania, as providers of higher education, while the education market and the labor market are in constant change. By their approaching in matters of marketing, they meet the needs and educational services consumers want.*

*Keywords: military, higher education, Romania, evolution, marketing*

The transition from a society of centralism has imposed in all areas of social life in Romania a series of transformations in full agreement with the principles of democracy and global and regional standards.

In the context of some radical changes and evolutions towards the market economy, the role of higher education institutions has become a complex one, at present they are obliged to satisfy increasingly demanding requirements coming not only from students, as consumers of educational products but also from employers that permanently seek highly skilled graduates that are capable to cope and adapt as soon as possible to a global economy characterized by the speed with which it changes the rules of action. (Mața, 2014).

Higher education must send in an efficient manner and on a large scale that volume of knowledge and information that corresponds to the new society of globalization, that does not overwhelm through quantity, but contributes to the individual and community development. Moreover, it should follow the transformations of the society which is in permanent motion and at the same time to make available to its customers guidance tools with which they could identify opportunities for affirmation and continuous development (Cosma, 2004).

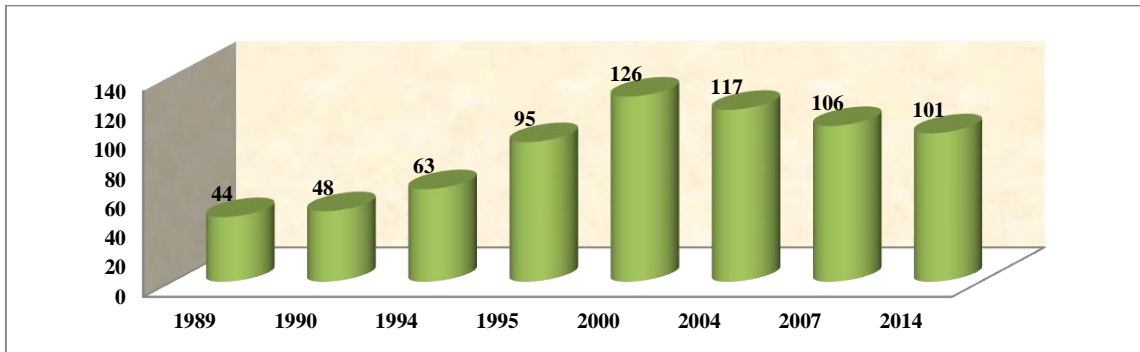
The importance of higher education has become increasingly obvious in the Romanian society of the 90's, universities being the institutional resource absolutely indispensable to the economy and to society in order to achieve the objectives of redefining the foundations of competitiveness while after 1989 the higher education system knew a crisis of identity and operation thus appearing the necessity to connect to the problems that society is facing. The main function of an efficient higher education system is to provide the society with an adaptable and mobile workforce, able to apply the skills requested by the local, regional, national and global labor market (Strajeri, 2009).

Education in the military higher education system is a complex process that synchronizes with the Romanian education modernization efforts, both the academic component and the military and physical training of students component are going through major changes regarding their manner of design and organization, but mostly in the manner they are conducted, the professional training of young people in higher military educational institutions considering future prospects and challenges (Bumbuc, 2006).

The Romanian higher education system has known major changes since 1990. First and foremost, we have witnessed an increase in the number of educational institutions and in the number of students as well as the emergence of private universities.

In 1989, the national system of higher education in Romania included 44 institutions of higher education, while in 2014 their number reached 101, 56 state institutions of higher education and 45 private institutions of higher education. (Figure 1)

**Figure 1. Evolution of higher education institutions in Romania between 1989 and 2014**

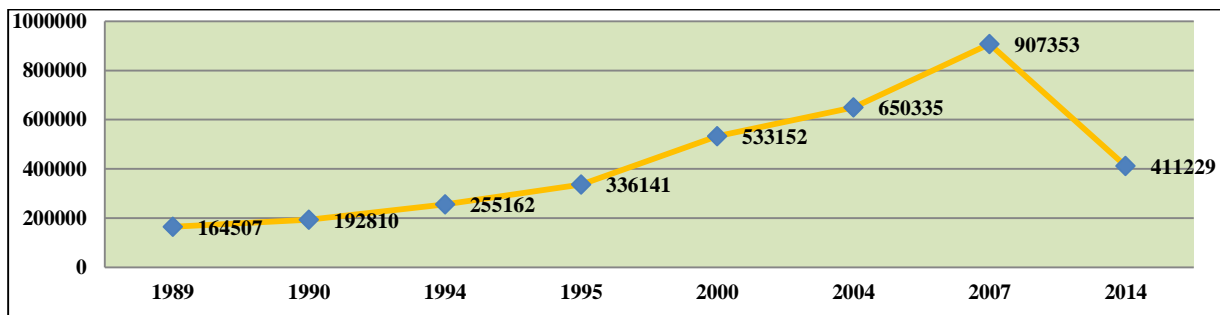


Source: National Institute of Statistics

The number of students has grown at an accelerated pace, from 164,507 students in 1989 to 907,353 students in 2007, an increase of about 6 times, while the educational system was not prepared for this phenomenon.

The evolution of the number of students had an upward trend until the 2007-2008 academic year, but starting with the following year there has been registered a decrease in the number of students. Thus, in 2014 there were with 50% fewer students than in 2008, namely, 411 229 students enrolled in bachelor studies. (Figure 2)

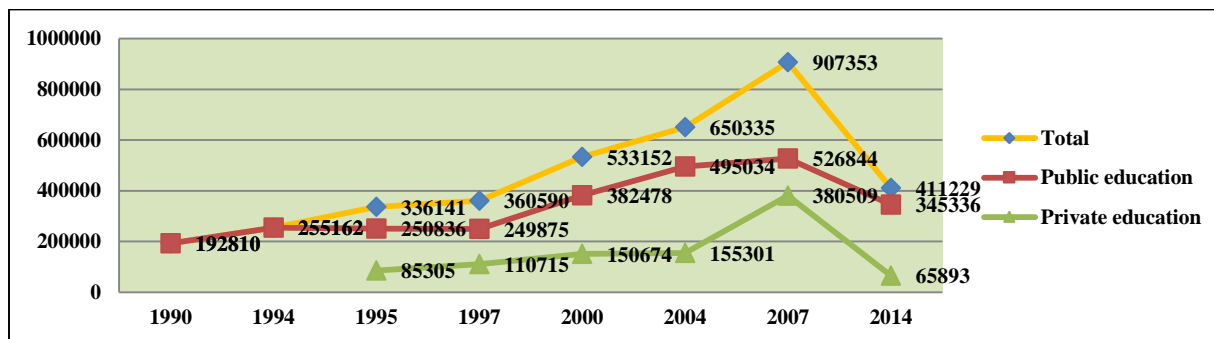
**Figure 2. The evolution of the number of enrolled students in the Romanian higher education system, Bachelor studies between 1989 and 2014**



Source: National Institute of Statistics

Private universities, which appeared after 1990, determined the appearance of competition on the market of higher education services. The evolution of the number of undergraduate students during 1990-2014, both in public and in private education, shows a conclusive picture of the higher education system. (Figure 3)

**Figure 3. Number of students attending bachelor studies in private and public universities between 1990 and 2014**



Source: National Institute of Statistics

According to the National Institute of Statistics, in 1995, when private higher education institutions began operating, 83,305 students were enrolled. In 2004, when Romania joined NATO, their number had increased about twice and the figure doubled when joining the European Union. Between the years 2007 and 2014, the number of students in private higher education institutions decreased with 279,443 students, while the number of students in public universities decreased too.

The Romanian higher education system has known some legislative changes after 1990 such as the appearance of Law 88/1993 (Law of accreditation of higher education institutions and recognition of diplomas), modified through the Law 144/1999, the Law 84/1995 (the Law of national education), the first Education Law after 1990, the Law 288/2004 which implements the Bologna Process requirements by reorganising university studies on three levels (Bachelor, Master and Doctoral) and Law 1/2011 (National Education Law) which brings a new reform in the Romanian education system (Drăgoescu, 2013).

The demographic decline after 1990 succeeded to increase competition in the field of education. From 1990 to 1993, Romania's population decreased by about 99,000 people annually while in the next period, until 1999, the decrease jumped to approximately 272,600 people. Population in Romania averaged 23,206,720 inhabitants in 1990, while in 2004 when Romania joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, its population had already decreased to 21,673,354 inhabitants.

In the 2005-2014 timeframe, Romania's population decreased with 1,435,043 people—about 7% of the population registered in 2005, in contrast with the evolution of population at the

European level where there was registered an increase with 12,122,386 people in 2014 compared to 2005 and with 143,094,513 people compared to 1990, representing 71.7% (Table 1)

**Table 1. The demographic evolution in Romania and Europe between 1990 and 2014**

Indicators/ Period	1990	1995	2000	2004	2005	2007	2010	2013	2014
Romania's population (number of inhabitants)	23,206,720	22,680,951	22,435,205	21,673,328	21,382,354	21,130,503	20,294,683	20,020,074	19,947,311
Europe's population (number of inhabitants)	363,763,000	446,808,100	451,841,200	492,555,798	494,702,123	498,408,547	503,234,845	505,114,995	506,857,513

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Eurostat

The size and structure of the population are elements that allow sizing the demand for educational services as well as the characterization of the manner in which they influence the formation of demand, demographic factors being widely recognize as determining factors of the demand (Epure, 2007).

In order to determine the enrollement rate of school aged individuals in higher education institutions, we analyzed data from the National Institute of Statistics for the period 1990-2013 regarding the total number of those aged between 19 and 23 years, as a ratio of the total number of residents of the same age group. (Table 2)

**Table 2. The evolution of the enrollement rate in higher education institutions between 2004 and 2013**

Indicators/period	1990	1994	1995	2000	2004	2007	2013
Population aged 19-23 years	10.6%	14%	22.6%	32.9%	45.33%	72.5%	54.5%

Source: National Institute of Statistics, TEMPO Online Database

There has been an increase in the enrollment rate of the population aged 19-23 between 1990 and 2007 or even until 2009, but after 2009, the percentual rates decreased with 23.8 points by 2013.

The number of pupils enrolled in high school, the ones that represent the demand for higher education, recorded in the first part of the time interval under review a decrease with

208,478 pupils (1990-1995), then a slight upward trend, from 787,211 students in 1995 to 791,348 in 2007, reaching in 2011 a maximum value for the analyzed period, before decreasing to 160,000 students in 2014. (Table 3)

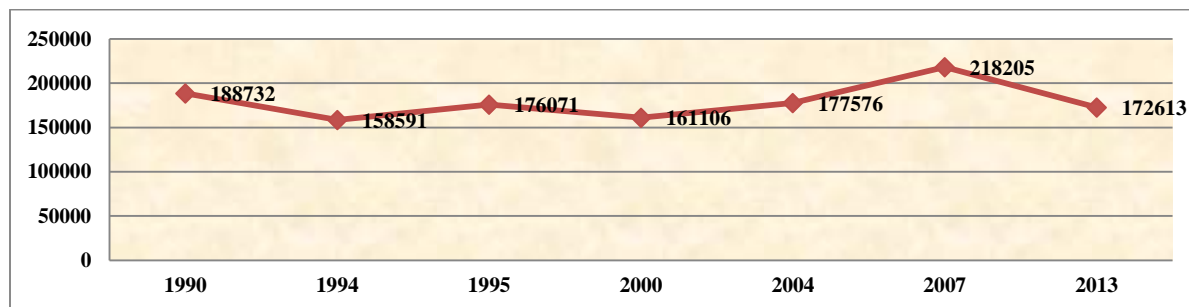
**Table 3. The evolution of the number of pupils attending high-school education in Romania between 2004 and 2014**

Indicators/period	1990	1995	2000	2004	2007	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of pupils in high-schools	995,689	787,211	687,919	773,843	791,348	866,543	888,768	831,810	776,616	727,072

Source: National Institute of Statistics, TEMPO Online Database

The number of pupils who graduate high school in Romania increased in the period after 1990, from 188.732 graduates to 217.743 in 1991, followed by decreases and increases, with a maximum number of pupils being registered in 2006. In the following period, the number of high school graduates decreased, reaching a value of 172. 613 by 2013 (Figure 4)

**Figure 4. The evolution of the number of high-school graduates in Romania between 1990 and 2013**



Source: National Institute of Statistics

Regarding military education, the evolution of the number of high-school graduates is presented in Table 4

The number of graduates of military colleges experienced decreases from year to year, they constitute a solid basis for the selection of candidates for admission to military higher education. Graduates of military college are a constant target audience for military institutions of higher education, training period undergraduate in the military system of education providing a

strong motivation for continuing military studies at university level, while familiarizing young people with the military and the specific institutions in this field.

**Table 4. Development of Romanian military college graduates in the 1990-2015 period**

Indicators / period	1990	1995	2000	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2013	2014	2015
Number of military high school graduates	720	1,065	632	414	461	368	360	435	318	280	342	314	317

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Database TEMPO Online

Since 2001, the military colleges register girls too, their number growing to 38.70% of students in 2004, the year of joining NATO, for the period 2005-2013 the percentage of girls dropped to 17.71%. In the last five years there has been a constant evolution in demand for military academic education shown by candidates of military colleges, due to graduation of baccalaureate registered at these institutions.

The number of high school graduates who have passed the baccalaureate is a decisive factor of demand of educational services market provided by military institutions of higher education.

Economic factors are a class of directly observable influences on the demand for education in the consuming public (Udrescu and Năstase, 2009), to analyze the effects on the demand of educational services market we considered the evolution of expenditures for education and those for defense, military higher education institutions being financed mainly from the budget of Ministry of National Defense, the amounts allocated ensuring the organization and educational process, such as expenditure on accommodation, feeding, equipment and other rights of military students according to normative acts.

There has been found an increased expenditure in education, 1931.4 million lei in 2013 compared to 2004 and 3089.2 million lei compared to 1991, and those of defense, 1.380 million lei in 2013 compared to 2004, the year of accession to NATO and 4095.1 million lei compared to 1991. (Table 5)

**Table 5. Evolution of public spending in Romania in the 1991-2013 period, million lei**

Indicators / period	1991	1995	2000	2004	2006	2007	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013
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Education expenditure (million leis)	778	2,057.9	2,017.3	1,935.8	4,309.9	6,470.5	7,367.9	4,315.2	4,207.6	3,994	3,867.2
Defense expenditure (million leis)	782.5	1,525.9	1,406	3,587.6	4,602.5	4,157.5	4,957.7	3,929.3	4,293.7	4,159.8	4,967.6

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Database TEMPO Online

After 1990, the military education system experienced an extensive restructuring process, with its rhythm always conditioned by defense budgets. The first changes were aimed at the abolition of political structures from the military and of military structures from the national economy.

Military education institutions have experienced significant changes. The Military Medical Faculty operating within the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy in Bucharest was transformed in 1990 into the Military Medical Institute, military higher education institution under the Ministry of National Defense (Sora, 2011).

In 1990, the Marine Institute „Mircea cel Bătrân” was reorganized, the Naval Academy, the military institution specialized in higher education for the Navy, being established.

Military Academy in Bucharest was reorganized, Military Technical Faculty regained in 1990 the name of Military Technical Academy, military institution of polytechnic higher education.

In 1991, military officer schools were transformed into institutes of military higher education, which represented a qualitative, but transitory leap in military education, the full profile and design for officers training being completely changed (Rațiu, 2009).

Thus a total of ten military institutes appeared at that time, and in 1995 they were grouped in two military academies: Academy of Land Forces „Nicolae Bălcescu” and Academy of Aviation and Air Defense. The Academy of Land Forces regrouped students in the following military education institutes: Military Institute of Infantry and Chemistry „Nicolae Bălcescu”, Military Institute of Artillery and Geodesy „Ioan Vodă”, Military Institute of Transmissions „Decebal”, Military Institute of Intendance and Finance „Gheorghe Lazar”, Tank Military Institute „Mihai Viteazul”, Auto Military Institute „Basarab I” and the Military Institute of Engineering, Construction and Railways „Panait Donici” (Parean, 2001).

In the new configuration of the military education system, the educational course is composed of university training for military students, including a fundamental scientific



component, specialized training and basic military training. The purpose of the educational program is the training of officers with a strong scientific and applied basis, making the achievement of the competences of warrior, leader of a military organization possible (Baboș, 2005).

By turning officer schools to military academies, the aim of military institutions of higher education is to provide initial training of officers through higher education, ensuring a full integration of the young aspirant to the military career, but with the accession to NATO, the model officer must meet not only national criteria but also those of the Alliance. By university education in higher military educational institutions the necessary intellectual foundation for practicing the profession of officer is established (Baboș, 2004).

Romania's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures (NATO) became the basic premise of educational reform in military educational institutions. The efficiency of officers training is largely dependent on the quality and selection of candidates coming from military and civilian high school graduates, that meet the training needs of the military institution (Tramontini, 2006).

Becoming a NATO member in 2004, Romania undertook an important role, becoming actively involved in the process of rethinking the principles and providing training facilities and action to promote regional stability and security by committing itself to a continuous adaptation of military education, continuous training of personnel and scientific research in the military (Ratiu, 2009).

The number of students enrolled in higher military educational institutions at all levels of education, increased by 5525 students in 2013 compared to 2004, while the high school graduates and even the number of students nationwide have decreased. (Table 6)

**Table 6. Evolution of the number of students in military institutions of higher education in Romania, at all levels of study, for the 2004-2013 period**

Indicators / period	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Students of military institutions of higher education	1,220	1,193	2,785	4,233	5,252	6,176	6,525	6,871	6,584	6,746

Source: Ministry of Defence

It is noted that even after European integration in 2007, the number of students in higher military educational institutions showed continued growth.

The demand for education in the military university system being mainly oriented towards engineering sciences, we present the evolution of military institutions of higher education graduates in this field.

**Table 7. Evolution of graduates of military institutions of higher technical education in Romania in the 1991-2014 period**

Institution / Number of graduates / period	1991	2000	2004	2007	2014
Naval Academy	44	208	246	286	302
Military Technical Academy	144	183	62	110	166

Source: Ministry of Defence

Becoming adapted to the requirements of beneficiaries, to the overall security environment, to the NATO and European standards, the educational offer of military higher education institutions meets the need for transformation of the military higher education, for integration into the European higher education. Evolution of the number of graduates was presented given the moments of institutional change generated by the options of European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Romania.

## CONCLUSIONS

Higher education institutions are organizations that provide education, training and science, the offer including skills and knowledge, characterized as immaterial products, provided to society in various forms: training specialists in specific areas, fundamental scientific and applied research, consulting, expertise, the involvement of the academic community in society. The result of educational processes can be expressed as the sum of skills and knowledge acquired, which enable graduates to effectively enter the labor market in a specific area of socio-economic life (Popescu and Rusu, 2004).

In a dynamic educational market, the integration of educational marketing and creating a relational platform linking military institutions of higher education and its consumers on the long-term is an alternative to achieve a momentary and financially satisfactory performance, that is less relevant for long-term development. Marketing tools can be used to maintain contact with consumers of educational services, customers of educational institutions, promoting educational

products, facilitating relationships with customers, reacting rapidly to requests from customers (Vegheș, 2006).

The dynamic of the external environment, the competition increasingly stronger for conquering and maintaining educational services markets, globalization, require the military higher education institutions implementing of educational marketing as a continuous process, not integrating daily routines, but in a projection based on strategies and objectives resulted from the mission of higher education institutions (Buzărnescu, 2004).

Since 1990, the Euro-Atlantic integration has been a constant objective of the Romanian society, a goal supported by a comprehensive process of political, economic, social and military reforms. Romania's efforts to join NATO were conducted in an uniform manner, which had the central objective of reforming the military and its compatibility with the NATO standards. The reform process held since 1990 was based on the Romanian Armed Forces Transformation Strategy, but even after accession, it continued operational integration to NATO and the European Union, reorganization of military education being among the objectives.

Achieving a supple, efficient and economical education system, responsive to the need for training and professional development of military personnel as well as the full consistency of the Romanian military education with the national system of higher education and with the European one, are objectives of the transformation and remodeling process of military education since 1990.

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