

## A VIEW ON THE INTEGRATION OF NATO HUMINT<sup>1</sup> CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FROM ORADEA IN THE LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE

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**Abstract:** The present article is an attempt to position an emerging institution – the NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence from Oradea, in the institutional picture of the city, and to determine possible ways of strengthening communication and relationship with other relevant organisations. In this respect, it also offers an excellent opportunity for interested entities to better acknowledge the main characteristics of our institution.

**Key words:** institutional integration, relationship, cooperation, military, international

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### INTRODUCTION

The institutional integration is an essential aspect for any emerging organization, no matter its field of activity. It becomes even more important as we approach features related to structures belonging to the field of security – especially the military field, and even more difficult to outline as we address a speciality characterised, mainly, by discretion – the military intelligence.

Despite all these, our approach is alleviated by approaching some strictly technical aspects, which are less related to the specific of the activity and mainly target the way in which, both internally and externally, an international military organization functions and establishes connections with foreign partners, and the influence that its existence and specific have on multiple plans of reference – economic, social, cultural, touristic a.s.o.

A parallel with similar organizations from other countries may provide interesting perspectives regarding the dimensions and characteristics of integration as well as its effects within the local community (also at the level of national representation).

The NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence from Oradea is on the course of self-defining itself and consolidating the inter-institutional relations, both from

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<sup>1</sup> HUMINT is the acronym designating HUMAN INTelligence, information collected from human sources (details on the topic will be offered inside the paperwork)

the point of view of the operational aspect and from the point of view of functional aspect. If, regarding the internal systemic processes, there are clear regulations and work algorithms (which are, yet, subdued to challenges specific to the transformational environment), the relation with the foreign players is overwhelmingly reported to the organization's managerial factors. This interaction covers subordination and cooperation relations, nationally and internationally, each of them with their own specific requests and expectations.

The development route of the institutional integration multidimensional process of the NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence concerns the military intelligence community of interest from NATO (specifically, that of information from human sources), the NATO's Transformation Network (within which the Centre functions as an agent of transformation and development in its field of activity), the national military environment, the academic and scientific research community and, not in the least, the local community.

In what follows, we will try to focus mainly on the challenges that an institution of this type faces locally, outlining aspects of interest for subsequent developments that should allow them a practical perspective of the inter-institutional cooperation.

### **BRIEFLY, ABOUT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATO HUMINT CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE**

As T. Wedge shows, the idea of establishing a centre of excellence may come from two directions: NATO (as a result of identifying some shortfalls within the capabilities that possesses) or one of the allied nations (as a result of the initiatives started off at the tactical, operational, strategic, and even political level) (Wedge, T., 2011). In each of the situations, the support between the two entities – NATO and the nation (nations) - an environment must be mutual and the initiative must find an echo at the level of as many nations as possible willing to participate to the project.

In the case of the NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence, the area of reference has been considered a niche area, the NATO Military Authorities Intelligence Coordination Group - NMAICG identifying deficiencies in the construction of a functional HUMINT capability within NATO, deficiencies that needed a coherent and structured approach from the allied nations.

At the time, the Romanian Army had already promoted an experienced body of effectives, while developing some working capabilities in common with the NATO military structures in different scenes of operations (Kosovo, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan, subsequently) and using the services of the General Directorate for Defence Intelligence (GDDI), a structure characterised by vision and flexibility in prefiguring and constructing some specific national capabilities, being an active presence within the coordination groups and the lucrative steps in the sphere of military intelligence in the NATO<sup>2</sup>.

The results acquired, the acknowledged professionalism, the interest and determination shown by the GDDI and the subordinated structures in the field of HUMINT have justified Romania's commitment to be a framework-nation of a NATO Centre of Excellence having as object of activity information from human

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<sup>2</sup> Details on the implication of the General Directorate for Defense Intelligence (GDDI) in the development of specific capabilities are enclosed in the anniversary edition of GDDI publication (General Directorate for Defense Intelligence, *Infosfera* - security studies and defense intelligence magazine, Year I, no. 3/2009, Bucharest)

sources, a candidateship accepted by NATO. This step was followed by an intense preparation process of the legal grounds regarding the foundation of the Centre<sup>3</sup>, as well as the negotiation of the participation to the project of other NATO Nations.

The main documents drawn up in this view were: The Concept of the Centre of Excellence, detailing the mission and the tasks, as well as the vision regarding the development of the institution as an axis of the HUMINT transformation into NATO, and the Functional and Operational Agreement Memoranda, stipulating the Centre's way of working. These documents were signed by the Allied Command Transformation - ACT<sup>4</sup>, Romania and the first group of participating nations – Greece, Slovenia, Turkey and Hungary, on the 16th of December 2009, at Norfolk/ USA. Subsequently, other nations joined the process: Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic and the USA, the process being further open to other NATO member states.

The Centre was established in Oradea, in an old military barracks, which was completely renovated, the existing facilities being updated to the required qualitative standards of such an institution. Apart from the military infrastructure on disposal, a series of characteristics of the city contributed to the choice of this location: a relatively cosmopolitan, permissive social environment, easy access (Western location, the existing transport infrastructure), good living standards, socio-cultural integration opportunities for the foreign staff.

Starting from an initial operational capacity, the functional bases were established and, based on the ACT commission's evaluation, the Centre acquired the status of international military organization (according to the provisions of The Paris Protocol of 1952)<sup>5</sup>, affiliated to NATO.

The official inauguration of the Centre took place on the 16th March 2010 and we were honoured by the presence of the Romanian president, Traian Băsescu, of the Minister of National Defence, Gabriel Oprea and of the Chief of General Staff, admiral Gheorghe Marin, and from ACT – the deputy commander of this strategic command, admiral Luciano Zappata.

In addition, ambassadors and military attaches accredited in Bucharest, representatives of the sponsoring nations, generals and officers from the National Defence Ministry and representatives of the county and local public administration participated to the event, emphasising the importance of the event, both for the military environment as well as for the civil environment.

The ceremony was intensely mediatised, both due to the presence at the inauguration of the Romanian president and to the exquisite importance of the event in itself. There were 43 journalists from 29 media trusts, TV channels, radio and national and local on-line news from Romania and local correspondents of the Hungarian television Duna TV.

The inauguration of the Centre echoed in the international media, too, prestigious publications taking over the information and commenting on the importance and significances of the institution, and its role in the NATO structure (Courier International, Jane's Defence, Le Figaro and others).

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<sup>3</sup> Based on Decision no. 12/ 26 June 2008 of Romanian Parliament regarding the establishment of NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence on the Romanian territory

<sup>4</sup> One of the two NATO strategic Commands, as well responsible for coordinating the NATO Transformation Network, where NATO Centres of Excellence belong to

<sup>5</sup> \*\*\*, *Protocol on the Status of International Military Headquarters Set up Pursuant to the North Atlantic Treaty*, Paris, 28 August 1952, in <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b520828a.htm>

## **NATO HUMINT CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE – CONCEPT, MISSION, RESPONSIBILITIES<sup>6</sup>**

The mission of NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence is to provide a unique point of reference in NATO, in terms of education and training activities, development of standardized policies and procedures and support the Alliance in shaping the evolution of its capabilities in the field of HUMINT.

In this regard, to the Center lies a series of responsibilities aiming to strengthen its relevance to the transformational landscape of the Alliance, and also providing a central place in the HUMINT community of interest in NATO:

- Support the specialized NATO forces to improve the planning process, preparation and management of specific activities;
- Testing, validation and implementation of specific concepts, techniques, tactics and procedures, based on lessons learned from military operations;
- Support the research efforts in specific technology;
- Provide products and services in the field of standardization in NATO HUMINT, to ensure a desirable level of interoperability of national capabilities made available to NATO;
- Provide specialized educational framework for NATO subject matter experts' preparation from a standardized perspective.

Translating these objectives into reality is done through a program of work established based on NATO requests for support and approved by the Steering Committee (the decision-making body of the Centre), following their achievement from the perspective of four pillars of reference (corresponding to the actional areas of transformation in NATO):

- analysis and lessons learned;
- concept development and experimentation;
- doctrine and standardization;
- education and training.

Specifically, the Center staff is involved in training, exercises, seminars, workshops, standardization documents management, experiments, analytical work, research projects, all contributing to shaping the image of a complex institution, at which level the energy is concentrated in synergistically provide a high quality level of products and services provided within the Alliance.

In order to reach a level of excellence in the Centre's performance, the extensive relational basis decisively contributes, which the institution built and consolidated in a short time, through a pro-active policy, through the engagement readiness and the judicious prioritizing of resources, ensuring its presence and being represented at the level of the main decision making and action entities in the field of interest.

Thus, apart from the coordination structures within the Allied Strategic Commands, working relations were established, first of all with the allied nations (through the NATO working groups focused on the HUMINT field, presided by the Centre's director himself), with structures from within the operational commands, with NATO training centres, and with other centres of excellence whose activity is interconnected at different levels of interest.

Yet, we have to accept the fact that a series of conditions reported to the specific of the activity are transposed in the relational level of the Oradea NATO

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<sup>6</sup> This chapter summarizes the press material released by NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence to mass media at the official opening ceremony

Centre of Excellence, constraining the interaction in the specific expertise field at the level of HUMINT interest community within the Alliance.



**Figure 1.** NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence, Oradea. The protocol entrance

In spite of all these, the institution is not isolated from the civil environment. Taking into consideration the fact that the reform and transformation processes require vision, performance and openness, we must consider the necessity to multiply the staff's fields of expertise, to ensure their access to environments promoting confrontations of ideas, to facilitate the understanding of the process like characteristics of the phenomena and allow multidimensional thoroughness of the subjects of interests. The Centre has in view the development of its presence in the academic community by emphasising its human potential, the active participation to projects open to the public and the use of the opportunity to pose as a promoter of the NATO security culture.

The openness and interconnection with the academic environment, the development of partnerships with universities, think-tanks, and research institutes, NGOs, within some specific projects ensure the necessary grounds for some "acquisitions" in knowledge and know-how.

Each of these established relations have specific meanings, prefiguring multiple development and institutional integration perspectives, as we are going to show in the following chapter.

### **NATO HUMINT CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE – PERSPECTIVES OF INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION**

The institutional integration represents a genuine challenge for any new born organization, in any reference framework. In this view, the managerial factors of the institution must manage two functional integration directions, one belonging to the internal structure and relations and the other concerning the external integration in a superior functional system – or systems.

In what the internal functioning is concerned, the main references reside in a "construction" interdependent on people, processes and technologies (including the working procedures). In a systemic approach, the inputs and the outputs (resources and procedures vs. product) are, also, accounted. In the end,

the type of the organization and its goal define and determine the manner in which the institutional analysis is approached.

The NATO Centres of Excellence belong to the intergovernmental organizations category (Evans and Newnham, 1998, 270), being made up of the participating nations (the framework nation – or the host nation and the sponsor nations), and benefiting from contributions of other nations or organizations (governmental or non-governmental), according to their area of expertise. As we have previously showed, the NATO Centres of Excellence are established based on a Concept and exist as such after the Operational and Functional Agreement Memoranda are signed by the legal representatives of the parties (the participating nations) and the coordinating authority – ACT.

Particularly, these centres benefit from international legal personality as International Military Organizations according to the *Protocol on the status of the International Military Headquarters set up pursuant to the North Atlantic Treaty* (28 August 1952), their assimilation in the international military commands being made even when the centres are not part of the NATO structure of command.

Regarding a classification of the NATO centres of excellence from the functional point of view, they represent complex entities, varying, in different extensions, from the think-tank status to that of education and training institutions under NATO's umbrella. As a relevant example regarding a multilateral approach (necessary to a level of performance characterising excellence), the NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence carry on a complete cycle of processes meant to contribute to the support activity of the HUMINT capability development: from gathering and processing identified lessons and the assimilation of good practices within the analysis processes, the development and experiencing of new concepts, the transposition of the results of the analytical research activity in policies, doctrines, procedures and, in the end, the transfer of knowledge and the development of abilities through the activity of education and training.

The organizational studies tackle the entities making their object from several perspectives at different levels of analysis. We have neither proposed ourselves to make an introspection in the philosophical history of the organizations, nor to tackle sociological problems or aspects specific to human resources. We will concentrate, instead, on an empirical study of the challenges perceived at the level of an emerging organization, within a specific environment. It does not mean that we eliminate any reference regarding the organizational culture, the understanding of the problems related to leadership, institutional ethics or other main characteristics or indexes of an organization, but the fact that we will be tackled in a less systematic manner in order to better answer the intentions formulated in the preamble of the paper.

From the point of view of system framework, we are underlining a first connection of the organization with the foreign entities. Organizations being, generally, characterised by complex, dynamic, objective-oriented processes, we can assume the relation between “inputs” (internalized tasks and resource insurance) vs. “outputs” (the product) as an important institutional integration characteristic, regarding both the qualitative indices and the quantitative ones. From this point of view, we can hallmark a decisive step towards the institutional integration at maximum parameters: in accordance with its constitutive documents, the NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence sets up its own

programme of work (POW) based on the Alliance's requests for support, centralised by the directing structure of the Transformation Network, also being open to private requests of the participating nations or of other beneficiaries/customers within NATO. In what resources are concerned, all the parts of the structure – budget, staff, procedures, interconnection networks, technologies a.s.o. are clearly stated in the constituent documents, as well as in the national legislation (taking into consideration the location of the Centre) and are insured so that they ensure the necessary premises and the optimal conditions for this specific activity.

On the other hand, in order to better understand the adaptation of the organization to the action environment, the complexity theory provides the perspective of a sum of strategies and structures facilitating the integration of the “whole” (the organization in itself) by accounting the connective performances of the component sub-structures.

Therefore, for a military organization, where the independence of action of the component sub-systems is strongly limited and controlled by specific rules, there is the need for an appropriate strategy which should intensify to maximum the opportunities and initiatives of the subordinated levels, their success being transposed into the success of the organization.

Assuming a sufficient flexibility in the management of NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence, as well as a clear vision on the role and future of the organisation, we can say that its sub-structures have been therefore directed to contribute, both individually and within the common effort to achieving connection with the relevant structures of the Alliance; the Center's organizational scheme itself is designed to provide specialized linking – in accordance with the corresponding pillars of NATO transformation – with the branches in charge at the levels of strategic and operational headquarters, and other Allied structures involved in the development of the Alliance's military capabilities - Joint Warfare Center (Stawanger, Norway), Joint Forces Training Center (Bydgoszcz, Poland), Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Center (Monsato, Portugal), and so on.

In terms of developing the activities adjacent to the purpose of the Centre – building-up the NATO HUMINT capability, one of the top priorities of the institution is setting up the HUMINT Community of Interest (CoI), conjoining to the Center of Excellence from Oradea the pertinent NATO structures, NATO nations and other organizations; the final aim of this initiative is to establish a forum for debate and developing activities to ensure mutual information to participants about actions, events, significant developments in the field (through formal action such as publishing a newsletter, managing a dedicated website, organizing conferences and workshops, and others).

Beyond this subject, the NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence was distinguished in the NATO Transformation Network as a proactive organization, participating in all important events in the HUMINT domain or in events related to the dynamics of its connection to the pulse of the Alliance, being represented under different projects<sup>7</sup>, working groups and workshops, coordination and standardization bodies, and so on.

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<sup>7</sup> As an example, experts from NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence have contributed to the development of Counter Hybrid Threats/ CHT concept – details in <https://transnet.act.nato.int/WISE/CHTIPT/Newsletter/AprilNewsI/file/WFS/CHT%20Newsletter%20-%20Edition%202%20-%20final.pdf>

Getting over the specificity of the field of expertise and the area of interests of the Oradea Centre of Excellence, its development as a Knowledge-Based Organization/ KBO by integrating the NATO vision, policy, and requirements in what the information knowledge management is concerned, adopted and adapted as a basis of its own information exchange needs, represents an extremely important element for the complete institutional integration.

### **NATO HUMINT CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE – LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL RELEVANCE. A VIEW ON THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION**

From a strategic point of view, the political-military decision to position Romania as a framework-nation for the development of the NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence reflects the vision of a coherent commitment of the country in the assembly of security arrangements assumed when entering the North-Atlantic Alliance, an event with profound meanings passing purely military aspects. Considering the partnership set with other states participating in the project (including starting from the reciprocity of engaging resources in similar projects of these partners), there appears a consolidation of the bilateral relations in different fields of the generous area of security and the increase of the level of cohesion in assuming the objectives promoted within NATO or of some regional initiatives.

At the national level, the NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence represents a genuine passport of quality for the Romanian Army and its image was used (together with other relevant guide marks) as an argument of the importance of Romania's contribution to the efforts of the Alliance in the field of security, in a video material ("*What NATO means for us*"), a part of the Alliance's public diplomacy campaign. This is just one of the reasons, which makes us believe that the Centre will represent a permanent guide mark on the list of accomplishments that the Romanian Army is proud of and by which it ensures a relevant position in the NATO capability environment.

Beyond the international prestige and the political relevance that the existence of the Centre of Excellence has internationally, locally the implications related to the institutional integration significantly multiplied and diversified.

Even since its establishment, the Centre of Excellence from Oradea has challenged the imagination of the local population (and not only). Its description as "a training centre for the NATO spies" prevailed in the mass-media – yet, in a relatively short time the spectacular side of this image has been dissipated and the citizens have realized what the NATO Centres of Excellence really represent (and, especially, that in the city of the Crişul Repede river).

Further, we will present a series of approaches determined by aspects of the local functional integration of the institution.

In the first place, in what the service supply is concerned (without considering the maintenance expenses afferent to the barracks' working), the foreigners getting in working relations with the Centre of Excellence (in a considerable number, as a monthly average) and, also, benefiting from this opportunity to visit Oradea (and surroundings) are excellent consumers. They use high quality hotels, providing complex services, they rent cars, enjoy the entertainment opportunities (restaurants, pubs, spas – Băile Felix and 1 Mai) and they visit interesting cultural attractions.



In this view, our Centre is always preoccupied to contribute to the correct orientation of its guests, who also become city guests. Among its working activities, the institution provides its collaborators general presentations of the location, of the city and the surrounding areas, makes recommendations related to the local specificity, offers pocket maps, directs the guests according to their expressed wishes, has accompanying/guiding activities as part of short trips to the main tourist objectives. In this view, having a somehow disproportionate balance of spare time compared to that dedicated to professional activities - favouring the latter, we count on references characterised by quality and the attraction level; these traits will represent reasons to further promote, among close friends, some arguments meant to determine their return as tourists, accompanied by family and friends.

It is obvious the fact that there are more to be done regarding the intensification and emphasis of the cultural characteristics of the area (professional marketing and management of the touristic potential focused on objectives and cultural events), their connection to other events, the setting of reciprocally advantageous partnerships, of a package of offers which should ensure complex sightseeing tours; we are confidently looking forward, in the first stage, to the "Țării Crișurilor" Museum, Military Museum and Oradea Fortress's (in renovation process) readiness, and to a superior capitalization of different festivals, commemorative days and celebrations. In this view, the partnership with the public administration bodies, the institutional management factors, non-governmental organizations would be more than useful.

An original promotion of the local culinary customs takes place on the occasion of specific activities gathering a higher number of people, when the food is ensured by a catering regime, in a concept which does not mean only providing food but also offering an excellent opportunity to serve dishes specific to the area. It is highly appreciated by visitors that end up learning the names of their favourite dishes in Romanian. In this view, the Centre's partnership with food service suppliers represents an important integration characteristic in this economic field, ensuring predictability, improved collaboration relations and a constant quality of services, in reciprocally advantageous conditions.

Another discussion concerns the local infrastructure. The easy access of the Centre's collaborators to the city of Oradea is of an extreme importance. Unfortunately, the main means of transport had in view - aviation, is not appropriately represented at the level of local airport, the existing flights being reduced as number and extremely limited as destination/connection. This allowed the airports of Timișoara, Cluj-Napoca and Budapest take over the staff flows travelling for job in the relation with the Centre of Excellence (the Hungarian airport being, paradoxically - yet justifiable - favoured due to superior quality of access paths which require reduced time for the transit transport). In addition, as the train is a less used alternative, certain visitors consider the car option.

The fact that the Oradea airport is renovated is a first step yet insufficient as relevance in ensuring an appropriate transport flow. We consider that a more courageous approach of the local authorities in charge and of the airport management in order to increase its attractiveness for the airline companies would engage a spiral development of this critical establishment, when - at least according to our own forecasts, the trend of the diagram of the prospective clients in the relation with the Centre is continuously increasing.

Related to the quality of the road infrastructure, it especially affects the inter-county trips; the access of the visitors from the West is made on good quality roads, through Hungary, but a future connection at the highway level will be more than welcome. Unfortunately, as we previously said, the state of the roads in Bihor County discourages the touristic activities and the use of the enormous potential that the area has.

Starting from the necessity to focus on performance as a feature of excellence, the implication of the Centre in the field of academic cooperation appears as an emerging priority. The theoretical research projects in which the Centre will be involved will require a solid intellectual approach, the exchange of experts in common interest fields reciprocally strengthening the quality and attractiveness of different events in which the institution will get involved.

The Centre of Excellence expressed the readiness to participate together with the University of Bucharest and the University of Oradea to the EUNATOROMBORDERS research project – Models and solutions for the systemic interconnection of the contiguous limits of the internal/external frontiers of the European Union and NATO (the Romanian sector), within which it has in view, based on the specific knowledge regarding the NATO aspects and procedures, of the detailed knowledge of the national military organizational environment and of the procedures accumulated during multidisciplinary approaches, the contribution through: the development of the theoretical and conceptual framework of the project, the setting, processing, and quantification of the data base, the support of the cartographic representation process of the data base; the creation of functional strategies and models of systemic interconnection of the borderland areas of the contiguous states with the borderland systems on the Romanian territory, according to each inter-state borderland sector and that specific to the maritime area.

Another project of public interest is an initiative funded by the NATO structure focused on emerging security challenges (Emerging Security Challenges Division/ ESCD), entitled "Human Aspects of the operational environment" (HAOE). The Centre ensures Project's Directorate and provides the core working team, collaborating with foreign and domestic, political and military experts, cultural advisors, anthropologists, sociologists, historians, specialists in communication, NGO representatives<sup>8</sup>.

The project aims to provide support for a better understanding of the characteristics of the population in areas of conflict/ crisis, and provide the foundation for a possible NATO major concept of in this area. The study focuses

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<sup>8</sup> In 6-8 September 2011 the first workshop of HAOE project was held in Oradea, where attended 20 experts from the identified fields of interest, representing well-known organisations from NATO and non-NATO countries: ACT Human Factors Branch; Acta Non-Verbal (Romania); Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (UK); Behavioural Dynamics Institute/ Royal Institute of Great Britain; Centre for Policy and Quality Standards (Afghanistan), Centre for Strategic and International Studies, USA; Defense Against Terrorism Centre of Excellence (Turkey), Graduate Institute of Development Studies, Geneva; Information Options Ltd. (UK); International Security and Assistance Forces (ISAF), ISAF Joint Command; Irregular Warfare Program, USA; King's College London, UK; Michigan State University, USA; Neurolinguistic Programming /NLP 101 Life, UK; UN representative; University of Cambridge, UK; University of Duisburg – Essen, Germany; University of Leiden, Netherlands; University of Oxford, UK; Western Illinois University, USA.

on strategic and operational level, without excluding, however, some implications at the tactical level<sup>9</sup>.

We can affirm that the need of performance in activity finds a sound resonance from the individual level. Center's staff is actively involved in developing their academic preparation, master studies and doctorate programs in different areas of expertise (where interdisciplinary approaches challenge the military science and intelligence areas, being able to provide valuable contributions and outcomes exploitable in the professional activity).

In addition, they participate in scientific conferences, workshops, research projects, and other academic activities, pursuing goals of personal development that decisively contributes to a growing intellectual capacity, an increased volume of knowledge and expertise and, ultimately, to the benefit of professional quality. In this regard, the main institutions we collaborate with, are: University of Oradea, Land Forces Academy "Nicolae Bălcescu" Sibiu, National Defence College "Carol I" of Bucharest, University "Lucian Blaga" of Sibiu.

There is a whole series of other aspects that can be approached from the perspective of a better integration at the local level, both institutionally and socially – considering the specific needs of the Centre's international staff. Starting from the multicultural aspect of the area – an excellent framework for the adaptation of the foreign staff and their families to a tolerant social environment, questions concerning the capacity of the education system (and its representation at the local level) to ensure a genuinely useful offer from the point of view of the requirements of the educational market may be launched.

If the education in Hungarian and German languages is well represented, the management factors in the field of education should realize the need to ensure these services in English, making the education facility available to a larger range of clients (the families of the foreign investors on the local level, of the foreign staff – as it is the case of the Centre of Excellence and also of the pupils and students from Oradea who would like to develop the skills which can ensure them the success of the future professional development in a world characterised by uniformity generated by the integration pressures of globalization).

We conclude that, for Oradea, the establishment of the Centre of Excellence represents a unique opportunity for its promotion abroad, in the NATO area of interest.

The city acquires notoriety by the working relations that the Centre undertakes with a multitude of NATO structures or national and international organizations active in the field of security in the academic environment. Oradea (and Bihor County) are promoted on the occasion of all the events hosted by the Centre and also by the centre's delegates participating to different activities abroad. Moreover, all the references to the NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence made in the North-Atlantic Alliance community are related to the host city – Oradea, all in order to contribute to its international acknowledgement.

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<sup>9</sup> In this respect, the next analysis directions have been considered as necessary: main drivers of human actions; shaping the community profile; inter-cultural communication; local situation dynamics; perception and acceptance of NATO operations/ missions; measurable indicators of population attitude towards NATO operations; human aspects in operational planning process.

## **“GENERAL GHEORGHE AVRĂMESCU” ASSOCIATION – AN OPTION FOR INSTITUTIONALISED SOCIO-CULTURAL INTEGRATION OF NATO HUMINT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE PERSONNEL**

The “General Gheorghe Avrămescu” Association is a private law corporate body without a patrimonial purpose, being an autonomous, non-profit, apolitical, and without a trade union character organization<sup>10</sup>, established and supported by the voluntary contribution of a part of the Centre of Excellence staff.

The purpose<sup>11</sup> of the “General Gheorghe Avrămescu” Association is the promotion of the values and symbols of the Romanian Army, of its accomplishments in time, the celebration and bringing back to the citizens’ consciousness of the gratitude feelings for the nation’s martyrs and heroes. Also, the Association has in view the promotion of the cultural, sport, entertaining, didactic, professional motivation stimulation activities, charity and support activities among and with the help of the military and civil staff of the army.

The entire range of activities subscribed to the objectives previously mentioned have a pregnant local accent, enjoying the consistent support of the municipal and county authorities and excellent collaboration relations with the local firms.

Rural tourism and trips in the most picturesque areas of the county, visits to tourist objectives, the participation to local events on the occasion of historical and religious celebrations, local dish tasting are just a few aspects defining the interest of the Association related to the involvement of the staff of the Centre of Excellence (and, occasionally, of the professional partners) for a better reciprocal acquaintance, the increase of the cohesion and social-cultural integration degree.

These events are, in the same time, excellent opportunities to promote the tourist potential of the area, to make Romania – in its whole, Bihor County and the city of Oradea – especially, known and interesting from the people in our professional community.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence has proven an exceptional capacity to integrate in the generous framework of the structural network of the North-Atlantic Alliance, emphasising both a strategic vision and the availability of resources necessary to meet the specific requirements. The institution has become an element of reference within the network of NATO centres of excellence, a pillar of knowledge and a gravity centre of the NATO community of interest in the HUMINT field, the main supplier of educational and training services according to the standards of the Alliance and a trustful partner for the NATO structures, agents, and organizations, partners or belonging to the allied nations.

No less important, the setting of the Centre of Excellence among the institutions of Oradea, the cooperation relations with the local administration and public institutions, its involvement in the social-cultural life come to fulfil the image of a multidimensional institutional integration meant to contribute to

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<sup>10</sup> Article 2 of the *Status of the “General Gheorghe Avrămescu” Association*.

<sup>11</sup> According to Article 3 of the *Constituent Document of the “General Gheorghe Avrămescu” Association*.

the prestige of the Centre and, also, to honour the institution of the Romanian Army.

I would like to underline the fact that this is only the beginning – there are still more aspects to be debated, cooperation opportunities waiting to be identified, resources to be used for the community in which we all live. This paper intends to be a step in this view, having as purpose the demolishing of an “urban legend” – the Centre of Excellence identified as a school for the NATO spies, a self-isolated and insulated organization and, also, a signal for the other public institutions of Oradea (and not only) regarding our openness towards multiple collaboration plans.

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Submitted:  
December 18, 2011

Revised:  
March 1, 2012

Accepted:  
April 25, 2012

Published online:  
May 2, 2012