

The Romanian foreign policy and the priorities for 2017

- debate organized by New Strategy Center -

Regardless of the governments' political support, Romania has shown that it is capable of maintaining a predictable course for its foreign policy. The NATO and EU membership, as well as the strategic partnership with the US are the fundamental aspects of its security and foreign policy. Bilaterally, Romania has concluded several strategic partnerships, but their development is still unequal. The integration into the Schengen Area remains a clear objective, though it is not anymore a top-priority, as the migration pressure exerted on the EU determined projects and initiatives that require a stricter border control and even to limiting the people movement in the EU.

The relations with some of the neighbours have known sinuous evolutions, the case of Republic of Moldova being representative. A rather anti-Romanian rhetoric of the president Igor Dodon and his hesitations regarding the pro-European track of the Republic of Moldova do not bring a positive trend to the bilateral relations. Moreover, several unfriendly political declarations and gestures have been recorded in Budapest regarding Romania that only makes the political dialogue more difficult. The perspective of the First World War end centenary does not offer much hope in this regard. The security crisis triggered by Russia in 2014 by the illegal annexation of Crimea increased the uncertainty in the neighbourhood, one that was already affected by the frozen conflicts and the poor consolidation of the democratic mechanisms in some of the states in the region. EU's solidity has been questioned in many states and the increase of the electoral share of several Euro-skeptical parties strengthens the perception. Along with the Brexit, the improbable became reality and everyone follows closely the election results in the Netherlands, France and Germany this year. The elections of President Donald Trump and his first decisions only increased the unpredictability on the international scene. As Russia regained its role as a global player and the openness of the new US administration for a more pragmatic dialogue with Russia provoke an array of concerns in the Eastern Europe.

In such a complex, difficult and unstable landscape which would be the role assumed by Romania and which would be its actions? How much would the Romanian voice matter in the EU reforming process and how much would the US be convinced to maintain the engagements in the Black Sea area? How much would the Brexit affect the Romanians living in the UK? How would the relations with the Republic of Moldova and Hungary develop? How would the Romanian domestic political confrontation influence the external image and the foreign investments? How could be the economic diplomacy more efficient in sustaining the interests of the Romanian companies especially outside the EU? Despite the unpredictable security environment, how could be set a coherent inter-institutional plan that would increase the economic and political relevance of Romania in the Balkans and the Black Sea? These are only several questions that determined New Strategy Center to organize the debate "The Romanian foreign policy and the priorities for 2017", having as special guest the Romanian Foreign Minister, Mr. Teodor Meleşcanu.