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**The interdependence between International Relations and National Security, foundations
for the regional socio-economic development of Romania in the Black Sea area**

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The interdependence between regional socio-economic development, foreign policies and national security in Romania has become increasingly evident in recent years, amid the intensification of geopolitical and economic challenges. Regional development, access to infrastructure and a consolidated diplomatic framework simultaneously contribute to the prosperity and strategic response capacity of the state. The paper contributes to this analysis by considering the different dimensions of the subject from the presentation of economic security, to the financial situation, to the exemplification of the influence of international relations and national security on the socio-economic development of the Black Sea region of Romania.

In a world where border demarcation is directly linked to socio-economic development, where globalization establishes a new era of economic transformation, events that occur in other regions of the world can have effects on economies around the world, influencing the evolution of prices and, consequently, the direction of monetary policy. International relations (IR) and national security (NS) are two deeply interconnected fields, whose interdependencies have grown exponentially in the context of globalization and recent geopolitical transformations. The analysis of the interdependencies between them must start from understanding the dynamics between the development of international relations and the redefinition of the concept of national security, in order to then highlight the influence of these processes on regional socio-economic development.

The objective of the scientific research is how the concept of economic security can contribute to the understanding and substantiation of regional socio-economic development, in the context of the influences exerted by international relations and the imperatives of national security in Romania. The interdependence between socio-economic development, international relations and national security is analyzed in detail, highlighting the relevance of this topic in the contemporary geopolitical context, characterized by increased tensions, competitions for influence and constantly evolving security risks.

As a summary, it can be concluded that the foundation of economic security is based on the individual characteristics and particularities of the entity, setting thresholds for evaluation indicators, choosing the most appropriate method of economic security to be ensured, ensuring effective measures against corruption and economic crime, optimizing the mechanisms for implementing economic security, abolishing unfair competition and monopolies. Romania's

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economic security is a complex concept, which involves protecting the state's economic resources and ensuring long-term economic stability, in the face of internal and external risks. In the current geopolitical context, economic security becomes essential for guaranteeing sustainable development, the prosperity of citizens and maintaining a balance in the face of global economic challenges.

Although Romania's economy has experienced significant growth, there are still vulnerable areas, such as economic inequalities, corruption and poor infrastructure. The informal economy also remains a significant problem, affecting tax revenue collection and labor market transparency. Measures to consider include implementing economic policies that support the reduction of economic inequalities and improve access to education and health, strengthening the rule of law and strengthening anti-corruption measures, promoting economic transparency and stimulating poor regions. Economic security depends on the particularities of each country, establishing thresholds for relevant indicators, choosing appropriate methods of economic protection, combating corruption and economic crime, optimizing policy implementation and eliminating unfair competition and monopolies.

The third chapter describes the interface between Romania's regional development and national security, socio-economic perspectives and implications for national security. Romania is an important economic, cultural and political player in South-Eastern Europe and must be supported by the European Union to continue its internal and external growth. However, it is widely recognized that Romania's geographical, political and administrative features are so unique as to achieve an equitable and coherent form of national development. If we add the features of the historical and economic relations with the 27 Member States of the European Union, we could say that over time, regional development has had a different rhythm and, consequently, Romania's economic convergence should reach the same rhythm.

For Romania, regional development has had its own specific manifestations starting from history, more visible in the context of the Romanian unitary state, especially evident in the transition period and accession to the European Union. Today's Romania consists of 42 development entities and 8 regions, which makes it the country with the most regional development entities in Europe. The main reason for the development of the 42 development entities is their wide geographical coverage, which takes into account the existence, development

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potential and development needs of the areas, as well as the need to operate in -urban areas. Although the region is a broader concept of settlement from a geographical point of view, from the perspective of the local development concept, the region encompasses the city, the industrial park, the ecological urban area. The increase in the mass of urban areas using the hinterland of metropolitan areas plays an important role in linking network structures. The interaction between non-urban regions and urban areas is the premise of a region that is well connected from a network perspective.

Looking ahead, potential future developments related to regional development in Romania may include capitalizing on digital technologies, promoting green growth, stimulating innovation clusters, and strengthening regional collaboration. By adopting a holistic and integrated approach to regional development, Romania can unlock its full potential, boost economic competitiveness, and ensure long-term prosperity for all regions of the country.

Globalization has led to increased flows of goods, services, capital, technology and information on a global scale, with both positive effects and challenges for nations, economies and individuals. Globalization is not a recent phenomenon; however, its intensification in recent decades has been accelerated by technological advances, particularly in the field of communications and transport. After joining the EU, Romania benefited from wider access to the Union's internal markets and became an active player in international markets. At the same time, globalization has meant greater dependence on external economies and exposure to global economic risks, including financial crises and international market fluctuations.

Globalization has had a direct impact on Romania's economic security, given its increasing dependence on external markets and foreign investment. The rate of economic growth has been affected by factors such as global financial crises, fluctuations in commodity prices and international economic developments. Despite its economic advantages, globalization can generate significant inequalities among citizens. The forced migration of young talents is a serious problem for Romania, with an impact on human capital and long-term development. Also, faced with an increasingly competitive global market, Romania must adopt economic policies that support innovation and adaptability of its industrial and agricultural sectors. In order to support socio-economic development and national security, Romania must implement a series of strategic measures. These include: investments in education and vocational training, economic and

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ecological sustainability, strengthening cybersecurity infrastructure, international collaboration to prevent conflicts and crises. Globalization has led to an increase in economic, social and cultural interdependence between different regions of the world. In this context, local and regional authorities have become aware of their importance in establishing external relations that can contribute to the economic, cultural and social development of their territories. Regions or cities can thus promote their own interests without depending exclusively on central authorities.

In many countries, the decentralization process has led to greater autonomy and responsibility of local and regional authorities, which can therefore define their own foreign policies. These authorities are increasingly involved in promoting their own economic, educational, cultural or regional development interests at international level.

Decentralization and the transfer of powers to local authorities are fundamental processes in the organization and administrative-territorial functioning of a state, with the aim of increasing the efficiency of governance, encouraging citizen participation and ensuring better management of public resources. Decentralization refers to the transfer of powers, responsibilities and competences from central authorities to local authorities.

Paradiplomacy plays an increasingly important role in international relations, offering local and regional authorities the opportunity to influence the foreign policy of their states and to contribute to the development of international relations. This reflects a global reality in which regions and cities have a considerable impact on the economy and international geopolitics, and regional dialogue and cooperation are essential for solving common global problems.

Romania's national security is influenced by both external threats and economic risks generated by globalization. Romania, as a member of NATO and the EU, benefits from military and political protection from these organizations. However, geopolitical risks in the Eastern Neighborhood (especially in the context of the conflict in Ukraine) and global cyber threats are factors affecting national stability. Climate change and global economic crises can also have a significant impact on Romania's national security.

The forth chapter deals with the current socio-economic landscape of Romania. Romania's economic evolution has represented an important footprint on financial markets, and for this reason, their results have been intensely concerned with social and economic analyses and studies, economic and social developments. Also taken into account were measures to ensure the safety of

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the population, including military spending and efficient social protection and national security, the constant allocation of resources under conditions of political and social peace. The social and economic landscape of Romania determines the objectives and priorities of economic development, public policies, and in the long term, monetary and financial balances are fully dependent. The socio-economic efficiency of national security depends mainly on the imperative of the population of Romania and to a large extent of the other regions of the world.

Romania's fiscal plan envisages a reduction of the budget deficit from 7.9% of GDP in 2024 to 2.5% in 2031, through an annual adjustment of around 0.8%. Therefore, restructuring budget expenditures in Romania by 2030 involves a combination of austerity measures, structural reforms and strategic investments. The success of these measures depends on the efficient and transparent implementation of the plan, as well as its adaptation to changing economic and social conditions.

The fifth chapter analyzes Regional Development Strategies that establish general directions for the development of the country for the period 2025-2030, such as: the development of strategic projects, fiscal decentralization, supporting investments in transport and energy infrastructure to facilitate regional connectivity and access to internal and external markets, the development of industrial parks and innovation centers to attract investments and create jobs. We should not forget the implementation of digital solutions in public administration and public services to improve efficiency and transparency, supporting startups and innovative SMEs through financing and mentoring programs. All these measures included in the regional strategies are financed either from the state budget, from external funds or from loans. The costs of these measures are directly linked to Romania's budget deficit, which in the period 2020-2024 was characterized by significant fluctuations, reflecting the impact of the health crisis and the economic measures adopted to support the recovery.

State budget financing and external and domestic borrowing have been essential to support Romania's economy, especially during periods of economic and health crisis. However, economic challenges persist, particularly related to public debt sustainability and fiscal stability. Romania aims to reduce the budget deficit by 2030 through structural reform measures and public expenditure adjustment, including by reducing personnel costs, reforming the pension and social allowances system and increasing the efficiency of public fund management.

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The proposed reforms aim to improve the competitiveness of the economy, reduce government consumption and adjust income and social transfer policy. Strategic investments in infrastructure, including in the energy and transport sectors, will also contribute to increasing the productivity and competitiveness of the economy, boosting exports and reducing imports. These measures will help correct external imbalances and reduce the trade deficit.

Chapter six deals with the economic development of the Black Sea region, an entry point to Romania. The present research proposes an analysis, based on data provided by an econometric analysis, of the economic development of the Black Sea region in correlation with the partners. The Black Sea region is a nodal point in the geopolitical and economic relations between Europe, Asia and the Middle East. It is marked by significant political divergences, economic competitions and geopolitical instability, all of which influence the socio-economic development of the states in the region. This space is also important from a strategic point of view, with a great diversity of international actors involved: the European Union, Russia, Turkey, the United States, as well as international organizations such as NATO and the Organization for Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). In such a context, the socio-economic development of the Black Sea region can only be understood through the prism of international relations and national security, which are interdependent and shape each other.

As we have shown, there are relatively few works in the specialized literature that study the economic processes of the countries that form the Black Sea region and their position towards an influential area like the European Union. Less research conducted on the Black Sea macro-region is due to the fact that, in general, the EU does not yet have a coherent policy oriented towards its obvious potential. First, the Black Sea region poses problems related to the performance of the studied economies, problems such as the high level of dependence on oil and natural gas imports – the EU being the main importer in the region – the low competitiveness of regional industries at the EU level, limited infrastructure, underdeveloped trade and the financial inability of the countries to address this issue. The EU addresses these problems on a bilateral basis, but I believe that, given the macro-effectiveness of the region, macroeconomic intervention is necessary. Romania, as a border state of NATO and the EU, has an essential role in the stabilization and development of this area. Strengthening cooperation within NATO and the EU is essential for Romania, given its strategic position in the Black Sea region and the current geopolitical challenges. By promoting NATO initiatives and supporting EU policies, Romania can

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significantly contribute to the security and stability of the region, as well as to its own economic and strategic development. All these collaborations bring benefits to Romania, the main ones being: Increased security: Strengthening NATO presence and EU policies reduces the risk of external aggression and increases regional stability (NATO, 2023), economic development: investments in infrastructure and energy attract foreign capital and create jobs, regional influence: Romania becomes a key player in the region, strengthening its position in NATO and the EU (NATO, 2023), resilience to hybrid threats: Cooperation in the field of cyber and energy security reduces vulnerabilities to hybrid attacks.

The Black Sea region of Romania, with an essential geostrategic position at the intersection of Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East, has in recent years once again become a space for confrontation between great powers and for the projection of divergent strategic interests. In this context, research becomes relevant not only from an academic point of view, but also strategically. Understanding the interdependence between economic development, foreign policies and national security allows for an integrated approach to contemporary challenges, offering solutions that combine sustainable economic growth with the consolidation of national security and cohesion. In addition, by focusing on the Romanian case of the Black Sea region, the research responds to a pressing need for scientific substantiation of Romania's foreign and security policy decisions in the current climate of geopolitical instability.

Choosing the Black Sea region as part of the South-East Development Region of Romania as a crucial case allows testing the validity of the concept of economic security as an analytical tool applicable to regional development in conditions of geopolitical complexity. If the research hypotheses are supported in this case, it is very likely that the proposed model will also be valid in other sensitive regional contexts.

The last part of the paper presents conclusions on the connection between socio-economic development, international relations and national security, taking as a case study Romania's economic engagement in the Black Sea region.

The Black Sea region is extremely vulnerable to geopolitical instabilities, given the diversity of interests of regional and international actors. Russia, with considerable control over the Crimean peninsula and the southern region, plays a central role in the region's security relations. Also, the frozen conflicts in Transnistria, Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh deepen

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instability and complicate economic development. In contrast, EU and NATO states, including Romania and Bulgaria, have pursued policies aimed at stabilizing the region through integration into international organizations and promoting an open market economy. However, tensions between Ukraine and Russia or between Armenia and Azerbaijan have demonstrated how fragile regional development can be in the face of security challenges. These conflicts, as well as internal divergences among BSEC member states, have led to a decline in investor confidence and economic fragmentation.

The regional development of the Black Sea cannot be dissociated from the geopolitical and economic dimensions of international relations. Collaboration between the states in the region, alongside international actors such as the European Union, NATO and Russia, has a direct impact on the economic prosperity, security and stability of the region. Thus, regional diplomacy, joint economic actions and natural resource management are essential to fully exploit the potential of the region and ensure a prosperous future for the Black Sea.

The Black Sea region, with its strategic, economic and geographical importance, is an area of crucial interest in the security architecture of Europe and Eurasia. Current geopolitical challenges, such as armed conflicts, economic rivalries and cyber threats, require an integrated and coordinated approach to strengthening national and regional security. This paper aims to analyze from a socio-economic point of view the measures needed to strengthen security in the Black Sea region, both at national (for riparian states) and regional levels, taking into account the current security framework. In 2025, the Black Sea regions will continue to face significant geopolitical instability, but they will also have multiple opportunities for economic development. Increasing connectivity through cross-border infrastructure projects and deepening economic relations with China (Belt and Road Initiative) will contribute to economic stabilization and stimulate trade. At the same time, in the field of renewable energy, the Black Sea region could become an important player due to the solar and wind energy resources in the coastal area. Regional economic projects, such as NABUCCO or the Southern Gas Corridor, are essential for the economic integration and energy security of the region. They were developed with the aim of reducing the region's dependence on Russian natural gas and increasing the EU's energy security. In addition, infrastructure projects, such as the Kerch Strait bridge (between Russia and Crimea) and the expansion of ports in Romania and Bulgaria, can stimulate foreign trade and investment. However, these initiatives are often hampered by political uncertainties and territorial conflicts.

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Strengthening national and regional security in the Black Sea region is a complex process that involves cooperation between the riparian states and international partners. The necessary measures to protect the region include the modernization of military capabilities, strengthening cybersecurity, strengthening the NATO presence and developing common regional infrastructures. Only through an integrated approach, based on collaboration and prevention, can the security of the region be ensured in the long term.

Socio-economic development in a region is not an isolated process, but is closely linked to national security and international relations. In fact, the economic stability and prosperity of a state directly influence national security, and regional stability depends on good relations between international economic and political actors.

This research paper brings a series of original contributions to the field of geopolitical analysis and security studies, through:

The integrative approach to the relationship between socio-economic development, international relations and national security, in a specific regional framework – the Black Sea region, part of the South-East region of Romania – which has been insufficiently analyzed from this multidisciplinary perspective in the Romanian specialized literature.

The formulation and testing of a conceptual model of strategic analysis, based on the interaction between three pillars – development, security and diplomacy – adaptable and applicable in other geopolitically unstable regions.

The case study applied to Romania, the Black Sea region, which provides a critical assessment of the state's capacity to capitalize on its geostrategic position in the current international context, by correlating economic, political and security data.

The identification of the typology of hybrid threats in the Black Sea region and their correlation with internal vulnerabilities, providing a framework for action for the development of resilient public policies.

Concrete public policy proposals that can be used as a basis for decision-makers in formulating coherent national strategies on sustainable development and security.

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This paper analyzes in an interdisciplinary manner the interaction between socio-economic development, international relations and national security, taking as a case study the Black Sea region, part of the South-East region of Romania. In a geopolitical context marked by instability and strategic competition, the thesis demonstrates that national security cannot be ensured in the absence of a solid economy and functional international partnerships.

By combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the research highlights the fact that emerging risks, especially those of a hybrid nature, require a rethinking of traditional security paradigms. The study shows that Romania has the potential to become a relevant regional actor, but this depends on the coherence of internal policies, the professionalization of institutions and active diplomacy.

The research results partially or totally validate the formulated hypotheses and lead to the conclusion that the socio-economic development of the Black Sea region, part of the South-Eastern region of Romania, can only be achieved by correlating all the factors and actors involved, which would combine economic development, democratic consolidation and regional strategic projection.

Keywords: national economy, economic security, concept of economic security, interface between development, international relations and security, Black Sea region