

# **LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMATION WITHIN THE ROMANIAN ARMED FORCES: INSTITUTIONAL PATHWAYS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH**

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## **Abstract**

Contemporary European security dynamics demand highly agile and adaptable military leadership across institutional settings. This investigation examines how authentic leadership - operationalized through three fundamental elements: personal professional maturity, ethical accountability, and decentralized organizational authority - functions as a key mechanism for long-term institutional renewal within the Romanian defence establishment.

Drawing upon a systematic analysis of international defence policy frameworks, domestic strategic documentation, professional military curriculum materials, and empirical research spanning the post-NATO accession period (2004-2025), the research develops a coherent organizational framework that links formal defence doctrine to observable leadership practice in operational contexts.

Findings indicate that when principled leadership competencies are intentionally embedded throughout talent management systems and professional development sequences, measurable improvements emerge in institutional adaptability, operational effectiveness, and strategic synchronization with contemporary alliance requirements. The study identifies three critical issues - formalized mechanisms for professional self-assessment and development, ethically grounded educational reform, and authorization frameworks that enable subordinate-level decision discretion - while simultaneously mapping structural and resource-based obstacles inherent in military organizations characterized by centralized command traditions and constrained fiscal environments.

The recommendations outline specific strategies for institutional codification, curriculum modernization, and assessment design that embed leadership development in practice rather than referring to it only rhetorically. Contributing to defence management and military organizational scholarship, this research furnishes actionable evidence regarding the translation of leadership theory into durable institutional transformation, particularly within military contexts navigating simultaneous pressures of alliance integration and organizational path-dependency.

## **Keywords**

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leadership development, military organizational modernization, defence education reform, NATO command interoperability, talent management systems, capacity-building mechanisms.

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