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**MODIFYING MANPOWER IN MoND  
FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE**

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**Abstract:**

It is well known that changes in the structure of an organization should be performed after extensive analysis, starting from the necessity of changing and lead the way for making the effective change. In MoND changes are very well planned and do not occur without warning. In fact, before the effective change, military units follow some strict steps, during few months. The project of future structure suffers a lot o changes/updates before becoming operating. But what happens when changes occur as a result of external pressures, without any analysis, in short time, and is limited just to cut the empty positions at the time? What will happen with the military unit goals? Will the remaining personnel accomplish all the objectives of the unit? If yes, how much will be the efforts and what about the quality of their work?

**1. Introduction**

During the economic crisis, the Romanian government took a lot of measures in order to reduce the public expenses, usually by emergency ordinances. In 2010, the Romanian government, led at that time by Prime Minister Emil BOC, has issued an Emergency Ordinance, in which it was stated that in public services all the empty positions should be cut from the function lists. I do not want to blame anyone, because we know that measures have been taken in accordance with the commitments undertaken by Romania in front of international financial institutions.

I will not study the implications on the military units which were in normal shape, having only few empty positions, but only a special case of a military unit that in 2010 had been performing its transformation, with a lot of unoccupied positions.

This unit was assigned for a new mission and, after months and months of analysis, proposals and studies, on August 1<sup>st</sup> the new structure, larger than the previous one, was approved by the military authorities. This new structure should start operating on September 1<sup>st</sup>, same year. Between August 1<sup>st</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup> the Government Emergency Ordinance had to be put in application and Minister of National Defense delivered his own order [1] whit precise instructions regarding the reorganization and modernization of commands, large units, units, subunits and military formations in Romanian Armed Forces in 2010. Unfortunately, being in the transformation process, this unit was strongly affected, remaining with only 60 percent of the initially manpower.

I will not cover all the implications of this kind of “unannounced” change. I just want to present the situation of the remaining people in the military unit after the change occurred.

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### **2. Theoretical phases during military structure change**

Transformations in MoND occur as a result of the reorganization of the Romanian Armed Forces, based on the National Defense Strategy [2]. Taking into consideration the new challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the structure of the MoND has changed continuously; the missions and structure of the military units are also upgraded periodically.

As I said before, all the changes should be done following a strictly procedure. Briefly, the steps and frame time stated in military regulations are as follows:

<b>Step No.</b>	<b>Time (days)</b>	<b>Time (chronological)</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Level</b>
1	0	March 1 <sup>st</sup>	Establish the mission Give directions to Service HQ	General Staff
2	30	April 1 <sup>st</sup>	Get informed Give directions to subordinate unit	Service HQ
3	60	May 1 <sup>st</sup>	Get informed Propose the new structure chart according to new mission (1 <sup>st</sup> version)	Unit
4	90	June 1 <sup>st</sup>	Receive the proposal for the new structure Analyze the proposal and, if need, give new directions to subordinate unit	Service HQ
5	105	June 15 <sup>th</sup>	Receive the new directions from Service HQ Redefine the new structure and submit it to service HQ (2 <sup>nd</sup> version)	Unit
6	120	July 1 <sup>st</sup>	Receive the 2 <sup>nd</sup> proposal for the new structure Submit the proposal for new structure to General Staff (a version)	Service HQ
7	150	August 1 <sup>st</sup>	Receive the proposal for the new structure Analyze and approve the new structure (final)	General Staff
8	180	September 1 <sup>st</sup>	Receive the approved structure chart Implement the new structure chart	Service HQ Unit

**Table 1** Steps and frame time in changing a military unit structure

For this case study, everything had been going correctly until step 7 (August 1<sup>st</sup>). After the new structure chart of the unit was approved, the government measures to reduce the expenses in public sector spending had applied. All vacant positions were suppressed for the peace time, remaining available only for the war time.

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In such situation, ideally is to reappraise the main mission and other additional tasks of the unit for peace time, according to the new structure and available personnel. If would be acted like that, the activity of the unit would worked properly.

### **3. Structure change made under external (political/economic) pressure**

In fact, the downsizing of the unit's manpower was done without any changes regarding unit's mission. Even if the unit command group had sent a lot of reports regarding the huge gap between mission and manpower, nobody on the chain of command agreed the reducing of the main mission or other tasks of the unit. In addition, in October 2010 the Control Body of the Minister of National Defense left the measure to reconsider the structure and the manpower of the unit (the dead line to implement their measure was October 2013! but nothing have happened).

To underline this specific situation, I specify that I am talking about a particularly military unit which performs with maintenance of communication and IT equipments within entirely MoND. Starting from the acquisition, going to operate and maintenance, along the all life cycle of the equipments, this unit has the most important role in equipments functionality. In this type of unit works specialized military personnel and they cannot be replaced with regular personnel.

As I said in the introduction, I will present only the implication on the remaining personnel in the unit. First of all I want to specify that every single small structure remained with partial manpower. This decision was taken in order to cover all range of tasks assigned to the unit. To do this, some specialists were moved on from their previous structures to the new structures. We can imagine that their efficiency was not so high from the beginning. Even if after some time they became more efficient, still too many tasks were assigned to each structure.

For instance, if one team was deployed for a mission on the field and a new demand occurs, it is not possible to cover it. To accomplish this new task are two possibilities: first, to designate other team, from other structure, able to accomplish this kind of task and second, to postpone the task. The worst scenario, but nobody wants it, is to not accomplish the task.

Sometimes, in order to cover all the tasks, is reduced the number of the team members, but in this case the occupational safety and health rules are broken, because some activities should be done with a minimum number of persons.

Other problems occur when the personnel should get the compensation for their extra time work. Considering that in the public system can not be granted financial compensation for the time worked in addition, the personnel should get compensatory time off. For this particular unit is quite impossible to apply this rule, because there are too many tasks, and there are not enough personnel to accomplish all of them. Not forget that they are still military and they have to participate at specific activities like duty officer, military exercises etc.

In addition, trying to reduce the expenses of the MoND, some of the activities which previously were done by contracting private companies were designated to this unit, too. This action had a huge positively influence in the financial domain (just for an example, to repair the light on the top of the antenna pylon, private companies require around 1,300 €, while repairing by unit's specialists costs only 260 lei for two specialists and the price of fuel consumption, depends on distance), but put a new burden on the

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unit's compartment. There is not a special section designed for the mission presented as an example, just few military personnel specialized in a short course.

Sometimes the quality of the services provided was poor, and sometimes the unit's personnel couldn't accomplish their tasks in proper time. The command group pushed the personnel to give all the best in order to accomplish their tasks, but was not in the position to punish personnel when the tasks were done in longer time than planned.

Looking back in time, we remember in that period all salaries in public sector were reduced with 25% [3]. Military personnel are trained to execute orders, but sometimes their mind is running around, looking for solution in their day by day lives.

As if it was not enough, the minister of defense in that time, Mr. Gabriel Oprea, accepted the mission for MoND to solve the problem of National Digital Map. In order to accomplish this new task, some personnel were detached to the Military Topographic Directorate, including from this unit. Meantime, according to the national legislation, the civilian personnel who have left the system couldn't be replaced (only 1 new employee at 7 vacant posts) [4]. Those two new obstacles increased the difference between the possibility to accomplish the unit's mission and its manpower.

Adding those negative aspects to the multitude of tasks assigned to this unit, a lot of rumors appeared within the unit's personnel. Some of them looked out for other posts and moved in other units. Some of the specialists got tired or sick (real or fake!) and required medical exemption. In accordance with national law, they received several days of medical exemptions, affecting once again the unit's possibility to accomplish all tasks. A lot of requests regarding the extra payment for special activities (as working at great heights) were posted, but in this crisis conditions, couldn't be provided.

### **4. Conclusion**

Showing this particular situation, I want to underline the importance of understanding those situations when the choice regarding the unit's structure is taken under the external (usually political or economic) pressure, when all the theoretical concepts that we have learned are broken.

Presenting the principles and the rules stated in theory in opposition with what happened in reality, I want to emphasize that this kind of practices shouldn't happen again. Even if we cannot totally avoid this kind of situation, besides fulfilling the mission of the unit, we should at least minimize the impact on human resource, the most important resource of any organization.

### **References:**

- [1] *Minister of National Defense order no. M.S. 45*, Bucharest, 2010
- [2] *National Defense Strategy*, Bucharest, 2010, page 18
- [3] *Law 118/2010 regarding necessary measure to restore the budgetary balance*, Bucharest, 2010, art. 1
- [4] *Emergency Ordinance 32/2010 regarding some measures for filling up the posts in public sector*, Bucharest, 2010, art. 1