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# **SELF EVALUATION REPORT**



***SEMPER UNA***

**Sibiu, 2012**

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## INTRODUCTION

The current process of the international institutional evaluation takes place in the context of major reforms of higher education in Romania, in accordance with the provisions of the National Education Law no. 1/2011.

The representatives of “Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy of Sibiu (LFA Sibiu) took part in the workshops organized for universities by the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (EAHERDIF) and the European University Association (EUA), the agency selected by the Romanian authorities for the international institutional evaluation process and signed the *Memorandum of Understanding*.

With a view to successfully accomplishing the self-evaluation process, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2012, the LFA Sibiu Council of Administration decided on the members of the self-evaluation group in charge to manage this process, their first task being to draw up the Self-evaluation Report in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the “*Guidelines for Institutions - Institutional Evaluation Programme: Performance in Research, Performance in Teaching - Quality, Diversity, and Innovation in Romanian Universities*” project carried out by the EUA through its Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) which is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (EAQA) and is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

The members of the Self-evaluation group (SEG) are as follows:

- Lieutenant colonel Vasile CĂRUȚAȘU, PhD, Scientific Researcher I – Vice-Rector for Scientific Research – SEG chairman;
- Colonel Mircea POPA, PhD, Professor - President of the University Senate;
- Marioara PATEȘAN, PhD, Associate Professor - Vice Dean of the Faculty of Military Management;
- Lieutenant colonel Dănuț MOȘTEANU, PhD, Associate Professor - Head of Technical Sciences Department;
- Luminița GIURGIU, PhD, Associate Professor - University Senate member;
- Anca DINICU, PhD, Assistant Professor - University Senate member;
- Ștefania BUMBUC, PhD, Assistant Professor - University Senate member;
- Lieutenant colonel Dan POPA - Scientific Research, Community Programmes, Didactic Logistics and Acquired Experience Department member;
- Lieutenant colonel Constantin TROCAN, Head of the Evaluation and Quality Assurance Office within Educational Management Section – SEG Secretary;
- Senior student Ciprian GOTCĂ - the students' representative.

The selection of SEG members was done having in mind a balanced representation of the LFA Sibiu important structures and their expertise in their fields of responsibility within the institution – prerequisite for optimum performance in the process of self-evaluation.

The self-evaluation report is the result of the process that took place in the period July-October 2012 and the data used in the drawing up of the report were collected by the SEG members in collaboration with the colleagues working in all structures of the institution.

These data were analyzed during a transparent process, including discussions and debates with the representatives of the academic community who were invited and actively participated in this self-evaluation report draft by information and clarifications. An important support was also provided by the management structure of the Academy and by the University Senate members.

In the process of the elaboration of the self-evaluation report there have been encountered some difficulties due to the amount of data necessary for the information in the annexes and the data presented in the report, but also due to the particularities of our institution and the characteristics of each compartment that must meet both the standards imposed by Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports (MERYS) and those of the Ministry of National Defence (MND).

## INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

At present, the “Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy of Sibiu (LFA Sibiu) operates 3 bachelor programmes, 3 master programmes and 7 postgraduate programmes for professional training, nationally accredited and is also involved in the implementation of research projects and mobility of teachers, military instructors and students.

### A brief historical overview

The LFA Sibiu is the successor and continuator of the traditions of the Military School, established in Bucharest, by Royal Command no. 36 of 13<sup>th</sup> of June 1847 of Prince Gheorghe Bibescu, aiming “*to train officers to possess the military preparation imposed by the requirements of their epoch and to be able to train subunits according to the criteria adopted by other European armies*”, 13<sup>th</sup> of June being the anniversary date of the institution.

Once national Romanian unity was achieved in December 1918, a series of new issues arose in terms of defending territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Amongst these we mention the increase of the number of military units and the necessity to provide them with officers. Since the Officer School in

Bucharest could not comply with these demands, a second similar institution was established in Sibiu, with Decree no. 5376/1920 that stated: "A second Infantry School is to be established in Sibiu, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1920 with the purpose of training the soul and character of future infantry officers, of strengthening their physical abilities and of teaching them all the elements necessary to successfully fulfil their duties as instructors and troop educators".

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 1952 the school was awarded the patronymic name of *Nicolae Bălcescu*; between 1962 and 1968, the study programmes lasted for 4 years; in 1968, the duration of studies was reduced to 3 years and the school became "Nicolae Bălcescu" *Military School for Active Officers*; between 1983 and 1990 the institution started training female officers in the branches of Infantry, Chemistry, Logistics and Finance.

After December 1989, under the circumstances of a complex reform initiated at the entire Romanian society level, a process that included the reform of the military as avant-garde component, the military education was connected to the specific modern military coordinates. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 1991, Government Decision (G.D) no. 190/1991 stated the transformation of the Officer School into a military higher education institute under the name of the "*Nicolae Bălcescu*" *Infantry, Frontier Guards and Chemistry Military Institute*. This was the beginning of a new era, though a transitory one, in the organization, planning and managing of the educational process.

In 1992, because of the transition of the Frontier Guards branch into the responsibility of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, this section of the institute was moved to Iasi garrison. Therefore, the frontier guards phrase was removed from the institute's denomination and became "*Nicolae Bălcescu*" *Infantry and Chemistry Military Institute*.

These were the coordinates that generated the possibility to shift to university education, a milestone in the process of providing a new socio-professional status for the Romanian command officers. Thus, beginning with the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1995, "Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Troops Academy was established in Sibiu. This institution integrated all students from: "Nicolae Bălcescu" Infantry and Chemistry Military Institute, "Ioan Voda" Artillery and Geodesy Military Institute, "Decebal" Signals Military Institute, "Gheorghe Lazar" Logistics and Finance Military Institute, "Mihai Viteazul" Armored Military Institute, "Basarab I" Auto Military Institute and "Panait Donici" Engineering, Constructions and Railways Military Institute. As the General Staff changed the name of the Land Troops component into Land Forces, since August 2000 the institution's name is "Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy. Establishing this new higher education institution in Sibiu was part of the military education reform, process that was mandatory, considering the evolution of the Romanian society.

Initially, in 2002, the LFA Sibiu was authorized to conduct the bachelor study programme "*The Management of Organization*", the field of university studies being "*Military Sciences and Information*". Later, in 2003, the "*Economic and Financial Management*" study programme belonging to the "*Military Sciences and Information*" field of university study and "*Public Administration*" belonging to the "*Administrative Sciences*" field of university study were authorized to function.

Starting with 2010, the institution has organized the master study programmes in the field of Military Sciences and Information ("*Organizational Leadership*", "*The Management of Organizational Capabilities*" and "*Management and Technology*"). In the same year, the LFA Sibiu was subject to an external institutional evaluation, conducted by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (RAQAHE), which accredited all bachelor and master study programmes and rated LFA Sibiu as "*University of Highest Confidence*", the highest rank for a Romanian university (Appendix no. 3 - RAQAHE report).

We should also mention the fact that, after the 2011 national evaluation coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport (MERYS), the LFA Sibiu was classified as *teaching and scientific research university*<sup>1</sup> ("B" category- MERYS Order No. 5.262/2011 on ascertaining the results of the universities classification) among the 30 institutions of higher education in this category (Appendix no. 2 - *Institution position within the classification of Romanian universities*). The study programme "*Public Administration*" belonging to the "*Administrative Sciences*" field of university study was included in category "A" while the "*The Management of Organization*" and the "*Economic and Financial Management*" study programmes belonging to the "*Military Sciences and Information*" field of university study were included in category "B".

### **The legal status**

The LFA Sibiu is a public higher military education institution integrated within the national education system, with university autonomy guaranteed by law and with legal personality, able to organize and develop accredited bachelor and master programmes and build up commissioned leaders for the Romanian Land Forces as well as for other beneficiaries from the national defence, public order and national security system.

The institution got its legal status as Higher Education Institution through the foundation documents, G.D

<sup>1</sup> <http://chestionar.uefiscdi.ro/docs/MonitorulOficial6septembrie%202011.pdf>

no. 190/1991 modified by G.D. no. 616/1995 regarding the transformation of the officers' military school in military education institute<sup>2</sup>.

Moreover, the institution has been evaluated by RAQAHE and confirmed as teaching and scientific research university by the Ministry of Education Research Youth and Sports Order no. 5262/2011 regarding the university classification.

The bachelor domains and programmes of study are confirmed annually after the accreditation by Government decision (for 2012, GD no. 707/2012 regarding the "*Domain's nomenclature and specialization/bachelor programmes accredited or provisory authorized, the structure of higher education institution, geographical location, ECTS for each programme, languages and forms of organization, and the maximum number of students who can be enrolled within the programme*").

The master domain and programmes of study are confirmed annually by the Ministry of Education Research Youth and Sports Order (for 2012, GD no. 4945/2012 regarding "*the master degree programmes and domains evaluated by RAQAHE and developed within the higher educational institutions*").

### **Geographical position**

The city of Sibiu (Hermannstadt) is one of the most important cities in Transylvania with a remarkable economic development potential, being also advantaged by its positioning on a traffic knot on the fourth Pan European Corridor and enjoying the benefits of an International Airport.

It is situated in the centre of Romania (County: Sibiu). Having a surface of 121 sq. kilometres, at a 430 meter altitude, with 155000 permanent inhabitants and 25000 temporary inhabitants, mainly students, Sibiu is the largest city in the county, being one of the most important multicultural centres of Romania. In tandem with Luxembourg, it was designated as European Capital of Culture for the year 2007<sup>3</sup>.

The academic traditions of Sibiu have their beginnings in the year 1844 when the Saxon Academy of Law was founded. Today, Sibiu has four universities, 2 state institutions and 2 private institutions (The "Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy, the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, the Romanian-German University of Sibiu and the "Alma Mater" University).

The headquarters of the Academy is located in Sibiu, 3-5, Revoluției Str., but the institution also benefits from locations for training purposes that are outside the urban perimeter ("*Perii Dăii*" complex of shooting ranges located 4 km away from downtown, "*Crințu*" training camp located 32 km away from downtown for mountain training and "*Poplaca*" shooting range positioned at 2 km from the town).

The LFA Sibiu main campus, of about 12 hectares, is situated in the centre of the city, including auditoriums, classrooms, labs and dorms, a multifunctional sports centre (gymnastics, sportive games, strength training) - 1856 sqm, an in-door Olympic size swimming pool, students' mess hall with a 900 place seating capacity, a medical centre offering qualified medical assistance and consisting of consultation and treatment rooms, wards, physiotherapy rooms, pharmaceutical warehouse, dentists' office and dental laboratory and other facilities. The university campus has about 1000 available places plus 440 additional places in training camps (Appendix 10 - *Infrastructure*).

### **Current regional and national labour market situation**

Taking into consideration the demographic decrease registered in Romania over the last 10 years (of about 12%) and the great emigration rate (between 2 and 3 millions most of them active on the labour market), we are aware of the major impact that this can have on the potential candidates.

The number of population of the centre region (Brașov, Alba, Mureș, Sibiu, Covasna and Harghita counties) is approximately 2.5 million inhabitants, representing approximately 11.8% of the population.

The age structure of the population of Romania reveals the magnitude of the aging process, thus, before the census of 2011 there were 10.5 million adults, 6 million retirees and 5 million people under 18 years. The share of the population over 65 years old increased from 9.7% in 1990 to 14.1% in 2009 while the proportion of young population (0-14 years) was reduced from 23.7% to 15.4%<sup>4</sup>.

In 2011, the labour market has recorded an increase of vacant jobs, after the huge drop of the years 2009 and 2010; the year 2012 has had the same positive trend.

Nationwide, the number of students has tripled in the last decade, reaching almost a million, most students from the state and private universities in Romania, respectively 70%, being enrolled in fee-paying programmes. The situation was the reverse ten years ago, when more than two-thirds of the students taught on budgeted places. In the centre region there are about 90,000 students, of which over 30,000 learn in Sibiu.

This context requires high standards of training for the graduates of higher education and their capacity to adapt to the labour market characteristics at regional and national level.

LFA Sibiu ensures graduates a level 6 qualification (bachelor degree) and level 7 by master's degree, in

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dreptonline.ro/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sibiu.ro>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.indexmundi.com/romania/age\\_structure.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/romania/age_structure.html)

accordance with European Qualification Framework (EQF).

Being the only specialized military institution which builds up commissioned leaders for the Romanian Land Forces and other beneficiaries in the national defence, public order and national security system it receives most of its students from Military High Schools, as well as from civilian high schools, these being attracted by the safety of a job after graduation and a proper social status.

Considering the employability of the graduates and their chances on the labour market according to their competencies, the Ministry of National Defence (MND) and other organizations belonging to national defence, public order and national security system are playing a key role in the development of educational process in the academy. Yearly, MND takes decisions concerning the number of students-to-be, and upon graduation all our students are commissioned and get a job in the system for an eight year period.

Graduation of master and postgraduate programmes organized by the Academy ensures the fulfilment of the requirements imposed by the MND on the officers for their career promoting, thus ensuring the attractiveness of these studies among the young officers.

### **Structure, staff and students**

The LFA Sibiu has used the Bologna system since 2005, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> study cycles being organized as full-time study programmes, by the Faculty of Military Management (FMM), founded in 2008.

The structure of the university is designated to fit the activity for the bachelor studies, the master studies and the professional specialization courses.

The university's infrastructure was modernized in the recent years to meet the new requirements and quality standards established at the national, at EU and NATO level, regarding both the academic and military fields of studies, being adjusted for a number of about 1100 students, out of which 800 at the bachelor's programmes and 300 at the master's programmes, and offering a lot of opportunities and facilities for students and staff.

The LFA Sibiu is managing the educational process by the following structures: the management structure, the logistic structure for the academic process and scientific research and the technical-administrative structure.

The management structures of the academic process consist in the FMM and the Military Training Centre, the latter having duties concerning the development and management of the training of the military students.

The logistic structure for the academic process and scientific research that supports the University community includes the following:

- a) the Section for educational management, with administrative powers in the field of military higher education, professional development and quality assurance of education;
- b) the Scientific Research, Community Programmes, Didactic Logistics and Acquired Experience Department facilitates the management of research activities and research - development projects conducted by the staff of the institution, as well as the management of community programmes and international relations;
- c) the University Library, with duties in managing the existing books and a virtual library;
- d) the Publishing House of the Academy, with duties in the editing of publications of the Academy;
- e) the Academy Printing House with duties in printing the publications of the Academy;
- f) research centres, laboratories and specialized rooms within the existing departments.

The structures that manage the academic and training processes are represented schematically in the organisational chart that shows the relationships, chain of command and the flow of information (Appendix no. 4 - *Organizational chart of the institution*).

The technical-administrative structure of the Academy is designed to answer, besides the functionality of a higher education institution, to the needs of a military structure as well (Appendix no. 5 - *Organizational chart of the central administration and support services*).

The administrative issues related to international activities are performed by a specialized compartment within the Staff Office, taking into account that, as a military unit, all the international activities must comply with the MND rules and regulations.

The current number of students (the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> study cycle) who attend bachelor study programmes are: 625 - *The Management of Organization*, 69 - *The Economic-Financial Management* and 88 - *The Public Administration*, and for the Master study programmes are: 100 - *The Management of Organizational Capabilities*, 100 - *The Management of Technology* and 100 - *The Organizational Leadership*. In addition, we have 18 students attending the professional training postgraduate programme.

The annual number of students is established by Senate according to the requirements of the MND and of other structures of the national defence, public order and national security system and the permanent dimensioning of the structures of the MND, a process that is taking place in all NATO and UE member states.

The LFA Sibiu staff consists of the academic staff and researchers who sustain the educational and research activities, military instructors and platoon commanders who ensure the military training, auxiliary

academic staff who ensure the administrative support for the educational and research activities and administrative staff who sustain all the activities of the institution from a logistic point of view. The information concerning the students and staff of LFA Sibiu and the requested indicators are shown in Appendix no. 7 (Appendix no. 7 - *Student-staff analysis*).

## 1. NORMS AND VALUES, MISSION AND GOALS

### 1.1. Governance and management

The university governance at the “Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy of Sibiu (LFA Sibiu) level, as a way of cooperation among the structures of the institution to meet the proposed objectives, has a few major features: it is participatory, consensus-oriented, responsible, transparent, responsive, effective, efficient, equitable and it observes the law. LFA Sibiu, along with other institutions of higher education, is currently facing two trends: (1) the development of competition between and within institutions, which are competing more than ever for funding sources, for the best teachers-researchers and for the best students; (2) the development of collaboration, institutions of higher education having the obligation, even if they are in a high competitive environment, to collaborate with other institutions of higher education, with stakeholders and with the Government.

The main features of the LFA Sibiu governance and management are imposed by the vision and the mission of the institution that are presented below.

**VISION:** LFA Sibiu as an Educational and Research University, part of the Military Higher Education System, at national and European level, specialized in training commanding officers for the Romanian Land Forces and other beneficiaries, promotes quality education, creativity and excellence in scientific research and institutional collaboration.

**MISSION** of the LFA Sibiu is to generate and transfer knowledge by:

- a) initial and continuous development, at undergraduate and postgraduate level, of the officers from all army branches/military specialties belonging to the Land Forces and of the military and civilian experts to other internal and external users, according to protocols/agreements concluded in this respect;
- b) research, development, innovation and technological transfer, through individual and collective creativity, in science, and exploitation and dissemination of results.

The Strategic Plan of LFA Sibiu for the years 2012 to 2016 sets as the main objective the functional integration in the National Higher Education System and in the European Higher Education Area, being driven by the national, economic and the specific requirements imposed by the beneficiaries. The main areas addressed in the strategic plan are: the institutional management, the academic component, the military training component, the scientific research, development and innovation, the human resources, material, the financial and informational resources, and the institutional development (Appendix no. 1 - *Institutional Strategic Plan - Executive Summary*).

In order to reach the objectives set in the strategic plan, LFA Sibiu faces a high degree of centralization of governance and management. This reality is due to the double subordination - MND and MERYS. The subordinating structures belonging to MND - the higher education institutions included- encounter difficulties in maintaining an operational functionality. In relations to MND, certain limitations related to the academic autonomy and the level of centralization of LFA Sibiu governance are obvious as lots of approvals from the higher echelons are necessary. This can be mostly seen when various management structures of the academy initiate actions regarding the development of some educational and research activities, of institutional cooperation and the modalities of spending the institution's own funds. On the other hand, the LFA Sibiu obligation of implementing the MND decisions reduces the possibility of action and of assuming responsibilities of the internal structures of the academic management.

The LFA Sibiu organizational chart (Appendix no. 4 – *Organizational chart of the institution*) presents the changes in the election of the university management: the establishment of delimitation between the Senate, as the main collective decision body of the university, and the executive management, represented by the rector, 2 vice rectors (for academics and for scientific research), 1 dean and the administrative director.

The Faculty of Military Management (FMM) has its own management structure that includes: the dean, the vice dean, the directors of departments and the departments' and students' representatives in the Faculty Council.

The management process for the academics and research, quality assurance, human resources, international relations, institutional development and social issues related to the students is reflected in the Appendix no. 6 (Appendix no. 6 - *Organizational chart of the management structure*).

The coordination of the executive activities is made by the Council of Administration which includes - under the leadership of the Rector - the vice-rectors, the administrative director, the faculty dean, and the students' representative. The Senate, coordinated by the president, takes decisions and ensures the control of the activity performed by the Administration Council.

A continuous improvement process, aiming at the de-centralization of the management, is envisaged in

the next 4 year strategic plan in order to:

- consolidate the strategic management that implements the national/EU legislation and the internal LFA Sibiu management decisions;
- increase the decision-making responsibility at faculty and department levels, by expanding the participatory approach.

As human resources policy is concerned, all the management structures of LFA Sibiu mainly focus on the following issues:

- promoting professional performance and personal skills, through an objective assessment process of the candidates to fill teaching positions;
- evaluating the academic staff and departments' activity based on performance and measurable scientific research indicators (applied in the process of setting a hierarchy of study programmes and university ranking);
- using specialized software type University Management System in the evaluation of teachers by students;
- maintaining higher education quality standards promoted by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (RAQAHE) regarding the academic staff and students;
- supporting the academic staff in meeting the new standards of performance, of the specific reference panels;
- facilitating the training of all categories of staff according to their career development requirements.

LFA Sibiu bases its own development strategy and policy on a well-established framework of internal quality evaluation and assurance system. The Rector, together with the vice-rectors for academics and for scientific research, the administrative director, the head of Human Resources and the Department of Quality Assurance are responsible for the sustainability of the Quality Assurance System (QAS) implementation. QAS is structured at all levels, from departments to faculty and university, including the specific quality standards for teaching staff, researchers, non-academic and administrative staff, as well as for students.

## **1.2. Academic profile**

LFA Sibiu has autonomy in defining and implementing its educational strategy and objectives which aim at excellence in the competence areas.

As we mention before, LFA Sibiu is classified as teaching and scientific research university ("B" category), and develops 3 accredited study programmes at the bachelor level in the field of "*Military Sciences and Information*" and "*Administrative Sciences*" (one in "A" category and two in "B" category), 3 accredited study programmes at the master level in the field of "*Military Sciences and Information*" and 7 professional specialization courses for the needs of MND.

According to the Bologna process and the Romanian legislation, there is a coherent action plan in developing integrated study programmes at Bachelor-Master (B-M) levels, on areas of competence of the faculty, and are compatible with the research activities carried out in the university.

In order to improve the educational process, a Moodle type eLearning platform is to be tested and implemented to respond to the needs of the students and academics.

The scientific research activity operates according to the plans of scientific research, development and innovation at the level of academy, faculty, centre for military training, departments and bachelor and master programmes of studies. These plans contain projects and research themes that develop the LFA Sibiu expertise acquired through research projects encompassing the following fields: national defence, national and international security, leadership, digital processing of images, advanced logistics technologies, influence of the electromagnetic fields on living organisms, decisional tools in the military and social fields, intercultural education, warfare, peace support operations, Euro-Atlantic integration, terrorist phenomena etc.

So far, the Academy implemented research programmes within the National Plan of Research, Development and Innovation (NPRDI) and the Sectorial Plan of Research, Development and Innovation (SPRDI) of the MND, the entire scientific research infrastructure being the result of the carrying on of the research projects won through competition by the staff of the institution (as sole beneficiary or in collaboration with other partner institutions). Moreover, even if the Academy has modern research laboratories that are used in the educational process and in the implementation of scientific research activities conducted in the institution, they are not used at full capacity by introducing them in providing different tasks towards the economic environment.

Up to now, the bachelor's programmes of study and specialized courses address the needs of the Romanian Land Forces and other beneficiaries in the national defence, public order and national security system, while the master's programmes meet both the needs of the MND and the beneficiaries mentioned above as well as other possible civilian employees.

We also mention that we did not have programmes or modules of teaching in English for foreign students within the mobilities of students, even though the institution has academic staff capable of teaching in English. This problem was caused by the delays that occurred as the institution began to conduct



activities within ERASMUS Programme too late. But starting with the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of the academic year 2012-2013, a teaching module in English will be accessible for the foreign students within ERASMUS Programme framework.

We envisage a continuous improvement of the structure and the curriculum of the study programmes through a harmonious alignment with the national and European standards, this being a key-objective in improving the quality of education.

LFA Sibiu acts to consolidate its "B" category position as a *teaching and scientific research university* and to promote a good quality teaching process, for both the bachelor and master studies, one of the goals being the raising of the classification level for all bachelor programmes to "A".

At the same time, in order to improve the existing eLearning platform, a collaboration with a specialized company able to make it operational is necessary, as we aim at getting a more rapid dissemination of knowledge to other universities, in Romania or abroad, thus contributing to the improvement of the quality of education at all levels and the possibility of carrying out of distance learning programmes.

Based on our previous results, the development of innovative research projects is also a main goal of the institution, strongly integrated within the education programmes, especially at the master's degree level. In this respect, together with the abroad partners, we will try to develop scientific research programmes within the FP 7 and NATO-SPS (*Science for Peace and Security*), these also representing an additional source of funds that can be attracted to the institution, taking into account that at the level of MERYS and MND the amounts of money allocated for research programmes are very small. Another source that can be accessed from European funds also, both for the development and diversification of the study programmes as well as for the development of the scientific research infrastructure and technological development is represented by the different axes of the Sectorial Operational Programmes (SOP). Thus, the institution got experience by winning such a project worth about 6 million lei (approximately 1.4 million Euro), but due to the legal framework and the lack of financial resources at MND level, the Academy had to give up the project. We will continue to apply for projects within the axes which support the Academy in achieving the proposed objectives taking into account recent legislative changes and the possibility of the institution to co-finance these types of projects.

As the exploitation of research laboratories is concerned, at the level of the institutional management structure, we intend to get the accreditation from the Romanian Accreditation Association - RENAR<sup>5</sup> for at least two laboratories with potential in the provision of activities towards economic agents, this being another source of attracting additional funds.

The military training of students, guided by the beneficiaries' specific requirements, represents a main demand of the academy in design and management of the educational process to build up a military leader/commander able to face the challenges of the modern battlefield and new threats.

Another goal is the increasing of competitiveness and collaboration at the national and international level, including the development of the staff and students exchanges in different mobility programmes framework.

This means that we will begin, starting with the academic year 2012-2013 semester II, a teaching module in English which will be aimed at students from partner institutions in the framework of the ERASMUS Programme.

Complying with the Bologna Process, LFA Sibiu aims to widely implement a student-centred education approach. The variety of academic areas results in a diversity of educational approaches: mentoring small student groups, increasing the students' practical activities and their responsibilities towards independent work as well as developing their practical skills taking into consideration the students' personalities and capabilities.

The teaching staff's and students' good command of English is useful for collaborations at international level, including the mobility within the ERASMUS Programme and the development of their careers.

The university's IST support is constantly improving and offers not only up-to-date information, but also new opportunities of interaction between students and teachers. The students' possibility to keep in touch with their teachers via e-mail in order to get additional information or guidance is an example of good cooperation.

The University Library has constantly enlarged and offers a good collection of books, the virtual library providing e-courses support for most disciplines and access to scientific on-line databases.

In this context, an integrated approach aims at achieving a good balance between academics and military training, between theoretical and practical activities, and between teaching and research activities.

Having the experience of the master's programmes, the institution challenges itself by opening the bachelor's programmes of studies to the national and international civilian environment.

### **1.3. Academically-related activities**

An important goal for the LFA Sibiu is the development of extra-curricular activities in cultural, sports and social events/projects which complement our study programmes, joint educational, training and research.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.renar.ro>

These may enable the development of the academy infrastructure, achieved through different financial supports in the form of awards, grants for the students and by organizing joint events and activities:

- meeting the beneficiaries' requirements and identifying new beneficiaries;
- involving the academic community in cultural, sports and social events/projects taking place at local, regional, national and international level;
- organizing scientific events for students and teaching staff that involve the local, national and international community;
- identifying new opportunities of students' and teachers' mobility within the ERASMUS programme and other programmes;
- developing projects in the institutional, sports, cultural and social domains initiated by the students of the academy, the Cadets' Corps and by the Seniors' Corps;
- supporting the academics' participation in cultural, humanitarian, sports and professional programmes organized by the local community, at national and international level;
- expanding the visiting programmes by inviting personalities of national and international academic life, military experts from our country and abroad, who gained experience during the international missions or who held or are holding high professional positions in the command structures, as well as staff officers with expertise on issues of interest for the academic community;
- maintaining an open relationship with the alumni;
- creating partnerships with similar military and civil institutions and harmoniously aligning the institutional development strategies;
- collaborating with representatives of local administrative officials to develop the infrastructure through projects of regional development financed by the European Union.

#### **1.4. Cadets' Military training**

The military training component in the LFA Sibiu contributes to the accomplishment of the mission assumed by the institution, that is to form fighting, training and military leadership skills, and to build up competences in a military specialty. The paradigm *BE, KNOW, DO* defines the characteristics necessary for a leader in terms of character, skills and action, as a leader must possess a sound set of principles, know what to do, then apply these characteristics to take appropriate action.

The content of the documents regarding the planning, the organization and the management of the military training meets the training requirements and standards of our beneficiaries, so that, at the end of their academic training, the students should be able to assume responsibility as group commander/other similar positions. The cadets continuously develop their intellectual, military, physical, spiritual, ethical and social components of personality. The concept of general military training and branch (specialty) initiation in LFA Sibiu is the reference document which creates the optimal framework for the accomplishment of the objectives assumed by the institution in accordance with the assigned mission and for the efficient use of the available time, human, material and financial resources, ensuring, at the same time, the premises of the professional development of the graduates during the entire military career. In the organics of the major commitments to accomplish the graduate model, the military training is a product of creativity, freedom to build, desire to understand, and determination to do. From this perspective, the concept of military training in LFA Sibiu is permanently amended and adapted to the operation requirements imposed by the new vision upon the physiognomy of the Land Forces leader and fighter.

General military training, the fundamental field in the architecture of training the Land Forces' future commissioned leaders, plays the main role in defining the profile of the future officer's personality, both as a leader and as a good citizen that well accomplishes the received orders and the assigned missions, this being reflected in each individual's behaviour, from punctuality to the ability to evaluate the complex situations of the battlefield.

From this perspective, regardless of the branch and specialty, it is highly necessary that the fighter should be able to survive in the battlefield by developing the practical skills of shooting with infantry light weapons, from all positions, acquiring the action and response techniques in various situations generated by the battlefield, managing the temporary isolation situations – all based on an exceptional physical training. The structure of the military training that the future officer receives in the academy includes the new concepts regarding the typology of the military operations, the performance level of the new or modernized technique and equipment, as well as the available time, human, material and financial resources.

Specialized military training of the students takes place in order to initiate the cadets in the military branch/specialty they chose, both through the academic component, by studying various subjects, and the military training, during two modules of specialized military training (technical and tactical fundamentals of the branch/specialty) in the training centres of the branches.

General and specialized military training of the students is a continuous process, which takes place during the academic years by studying subjects included in the curricula, grouped in distinct modules of military training, and also during one day per week of military training.

## **1.5. Funding**

LFA Sibiu, as a public higher academic institution, is budgeted from governmental funds, but it has identified additional resources of self-funding from study programmes, projects and services, consultancy and technical services, sponsorships etc. The total budget of the university was almost constant during the last 5 years, but the FMM does not have a separate budget from that of the academy, due to the military rules (Appendix no. 9 - *Institution budget of the last 5 years*). Although the FMM does not have its own budget, all the activities performed at the faculty level were well budgeted in order to accomplish the proposed objectives.

Most of the research and training infrastructure was improved as a result of the research projects that our institution developed as a single beneficiary or in collaboration with other institutions in the country.

The funds drawn by the ERASMUS programme and "*European initiative for the exchange of young officers*"- Military ERASMUS made it possible to implement activities that otherwise would have been funded from the Academy's budget. Even if we are at the beginning of this activity, the programme is working successfully and provides the institution with a solid basis for the development of the collaborative relationships with other similar EU institutions.

To enhance its own income the LFA Sibiu has in view an increase in privately funded students and fees and acquisition of funds from external sources (SPRDI of MND, NPRDI, SOP and FP 7, NATO-SPS).

## **1.6. The university position and strategic choices**

LFA Sibiu is the only specialized academic institution which builds up commissioned leaders for the Romanian Land Forces. Moreover, it is able to form or specialized professionals for other beneficiaries in the national defence, public order and national security system or for civilian environment.

Among the 4 local universities, LFA Sibiu is one of the two universities classified in the "B" category and, regionally, the best level reached by institutions of higher education is also the "B" category.

At national level, as far as the LFA Sibiu position is regarded in comparison to the position of the other 4 military institutions of higher education ("Henry Coandă" Air Forces Academy, "Mircea cel Bătrân" Naval Forces Academy, Technical Military Academy, "Carol I" National Defence University ), we mention that they obtained the same level of classification.

In terms of the study programmes, as we mentioned before, of the 3 bachelor programmes, one is in the "A" category and the other two in the "B" category. Being a strong point in the terms of local, regional and national positioning, this represents an opportunity for collaboration with part-time teaching staff from civilian universities.

Considering its traditional values, the infrastructure and human resources, the financing, the acquired results and performances, the present and future society needs, and in connection with the international trends, LFA Sibiu formulated its specific vision for Excellence, Competitiveness and Societal Integration at the level of EU.

The strategic objective of the academy in terms of the national classification of higher education institutions in Romania is consolidating its position and obtaining access to superior category, and as far as all the bachelor programmes are concerned, the objective is their promotion in the "A" category.

The short term strategy aims at training students at the bachelor's and master's level, firstly for the needs of the MND and of other beneficiaries in the field of defence, public order and national security, and secondly to meet the local/regional needs by opening the bachelor programmes for civilian students, as are the existing master study programmes.

In order to support the educational process, the LFA Sibiu has as priority the development both of institutional partnerships and mobilities of students and teachers, to harmonize the process of building up officers for the Romanian Land Forces with that of other officers of the NATO and EU countries.

Furthermore, a priority is represented by the accessing of funds for scientific research from national, NATO and EU sources in order to support the educational process at a high scientific level.

The strategic choices have been made considering the available resources, the institutional potential for development and the opportunity to access ERASMUS and EU Programmes, but also taking into account the constraints in terms of personnel, funding and legal framework.

## **2. GOVERNANCE AND ACTIVITIES**

### **2.1. Governance and management**

"Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy of Sibiu (LFA Sibiu) functions under a double subordination: Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport (MERYS) and Ministry of National Defence (MND), under legislative constraints concerning staff hiring (especially the academic one) and with a low budget due to the global economic crises that influence both Romania and the other EU countries.

### **Analysis of management practice**

The new Law of Education adopted in 2011 offered the opportunity for the entire academic community to

elect new management structures. The present management structures of LFA Sibiu at different levels are presented in the Appendix no. 6 (Appendix no. 6 - *The management structures*). The members of the university's management structures were elected through a bottom-up process (successive elections at department/Faculty Council, and university's Senate, according to the legal provisions of the Education Law No. 1/2011 and the methodology for university's elections approved by the university's Senate).

The University Senate, with democratically elected representatives from each department of the faculty and students representatives from bachelor and master programmes, is the decision making body of LFA Sibiu. The University Senate decides upon the major issues concerning LFA Sibiu strategies, policies and academic activities. The Senate elected its president and the coordinators of Senate commissions. The permanent commissions of the University Senate are the following: Commission no 1: *Prognosis, academic development, scientific research and inter-institutional cooperation*; Commission no 2: *Control of executive management and Council of Administration*; Commission no 3: *Evaluation, educational quality control, ethics and professional deontology*; Commission no 4: *Academic community, internal management of normative and procedural framework*.

According to the internal methodology and to a referendum, the Rector was elected by all university's academic staff and student representatives and afterwards, following a top-down system, the Rector nominated the vice-rectors.

Upon a public competition, the dean from the two candidates validated by the Faculty Council was selected and subsequently the dean nominated the vice-dean.

The department management is represented by a director and a council of the department and they were elected from among and by the department academic staff. The departments are responsible mainly for the academic programmes of study, selection and promotion of its staff and the research and education activities.

The management staff (Rector, vice-rectors, dean, vice-dean and directors of department) was selected from among professors and associate professors from LFA Sibiu.

The operative management structure - Council of Administration - includes the rector, vice-rectors, the dean, the university administrative director and the students' representative, each member being responsible for specific management activities according to the university strategy and organizational chart (Appendix no. 6 - *The management structures*).

The Faculty Council, composed by dean, vice-dean and departments' and students' representatives, is the collective management structure with competences in the field of planning, organizing, developing, monitoring and improving the educational processes specific to the fields of study, according to the current legal stipulations and to the activity of scientific research under the responsibility of the Faculty of Military Management (FMM).

To support the decision making process and the implementation of the strategic objectives, as well as the quality assurance of the management activities, the following structures operate at the university level: the *Educational Management Section* including *The Evaluation Office*; *Scientific Research, Community Programmes, Didactic Logistics and Acquired Experience Section*; *Economic-Financial-Accounting Office*; *Human Resources, Legal Assistance and Public Relations Offices*; *Logistics Structures and Educational Support*; *Information Technology and Communication Section* (Appendix 5 - *Organizational chart of the central administration and support services*).

The main activities carried out at the faculty level are analyzed periodically in the meetings of the departments and the Faculty Council, in order to identify possible drawbacks and eliminate/reduce their effects. Commissions for quality assessment of education established at the level of departments draw up evaluation reports half yearly and yearly, while those established at the level of programmes of study draw up these reports yearly.

The organizational structure of the faculty ensures an optimal operation of information flows, both vertically and horizontally. During the regular meetings with the directors of departments, the faculty management team ensures convergence and coherence of the work of the three departments.

The activities carried out in the Academy are regularly reviewed during meetings of the Council of Administration, in order to harmonize the activities of the Academy structures and to implement the academic Senate's decisions. The organizational structure and chain of command of the Academy try to ensure the optimal information flow between compartments and establish responsibilities, deadlines and quality standards on activities that are carried out in the institution. For this purpose, Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) have been developed and regularly updated, as well as documents containing operational procedures related to the activities carried out in the Academy. These procedures require the involvement of the staff of the institution in activities according to their respective responsibilities and level of expertise.

These managerial practices illustrate the implementation peculiarities of the general principles of the academic management in our institution and the management structure's responsibilities stipulated in the law No. 1/2011.

## Academic activities and policies

The diversifying of the university specializations starting with 2002-2003 represented the necessity to answer the operational needs developed during peace-time or in mission, according to the changes occurring in the Euro Atlantic military space and with European Qualification Framework (EQF). In this context, we accredited 3 bachelor's degree study programmes (*Management of Organization, Economic-Financial Management* and *Public Administration*) and 3 master study programmes (*Organizational Leadership, Organizational Capability Management* and *Management and Technology*).

In order to meet the challenges of the modern battlefield, the *Management of Organization* specialization offers our graduates the managerial competences necessary to lead military structures. The Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Evaluating System (PPBES) within Romanian Army imposed the *Economic-Financial Management* specialization. The *Public Administration* programme designed for the military covers a wide area of the requirements of the contemporary specific missions regarding the civil-military cooperation.

The recruitment, selection and the promotion of the academic and administrative staff are done within the framework of the national legislation (Education Law No. 1/2011, Labour Code), and specific military regulations. For example, the military teaching staff must meet both the standards imposed by MERYS as well as the specific ones imposed by the MND.

A sensitive issue concerning the human resources policy is the fact that, having double subordination (MERYS and MND), some recruitment and promotion processes are postponed/blocked because of incoherent norms. Moreover, the national regulations regarding personnel hiring/promoting that were applied in the last years to all public sectors provided a drastic hiring limitation.

Admission to bachelor and master study programmes is a transparent process, LFA Sibiu aiming to attract well prepared candidates, able to meet the selection criteria established at the level of MND.

As the admission for the bachelor study programmes is concerned, the MND has specialized structures at the level of each county capital for the recruitment and initial selection of candidates as well as promoting real and accurate information on the military career (County Information-Recruitment Offices - CIRO) and three Area Selection and Orientation Centres (ASOC) which are responsible for the first stage of selection, the second one being made in our academy. Candidates are recruited based on certain specific requirements stipulated in Recruitment Criteria for the Admission in Military Higher Education and Occupying the Positions of Soldiers/Enlisted Volunteer Soldiers and Soldiers/Reserve Volunteer Enlisted, in Times of Peace. The registration on the admission exam to LFA Sibiu is done based on the Baccalaureate diploma and the registration certificate, as well as the candidate file sent from the ASOC or military high schools.

The admission process is based on several combined criteria and includes a first stage of the selection process organized by the ASOC of the MND, evaluating the physical, psychological and medical condition of candidates, and a second stage organized by the academy. Following the initial admission stage organized by the ASOC, only those candidates who have "PASSED", as well as the candidates selected by the other beneficiaries for the seats assigned to them, take part in the second stage of the admission exam.

The second stage of the selection process, organized by the Academy, consists in the assessment of the linguistic proficiency (English language written test-with a 20% weight in final score) and knowledge assessment by written exam (for *Management of Organization* and *Economic - Financial Management* the disciplines and the associated weights are: Mathematics (2/3) and Psychology (1/3); for *Public Administration*: Romanian Language and Communication (2/3) and Psychology (1/3) - with a 80% weight in final score). The ranking of the candidates is made in decreasing order of the grades, these being calculated according to the following formula:  $0.2 \times \text{English language test score} + 0.8 \times \text{second written exam score}$ . In 2012, the competition ratio ranged from 2.5/1 to 12.23/1 (after the first phase of the selection), the highest admission score being 9.92 and the lowest 7.56 (out of 10).

Admission to the master study programmes is open for the military and civilian candidates being entirely organized by the LFA Sibiu, based on an interview and the bachelor academic results.

The Methodology for the Organization of Admissions in LFA Sibiu for every academic year is approved by the University Senate and posted together with the registration conditions and bibliography on the website, 6 months before the admission exam. The methodology is also distributed to CIRO. In addition, the LFA Sibiu educational offer and the specific requirements for candidates' recruitment have been promoted on our own website.

The implementation of the management strategy, policies and procedures is sometimes limited due to the specific military rules and regulations incoherent with the educational national framework issued by MERYS.

The budget proposals developed at the academy level are approved at MND level, while the budget execution is the direct responsibility of the Rector, as tertiary credit authorizing officer.

Based on a thorough analysis regarding the achievement of the proposed objectives and the outcomes, the Senate annually approves the budget execution that is a public document.

### **Analysis of research**

The scientific research is projected in accordance with the European Area of Scientific Research requirements, the MERYS regulations, responding at the same time to MND and Land Forces Headquarters directions.

The coordination of all activities related to scientific research, including monitoring and evaluation, dissemination and valorisation of research results, is made by the vice-Rector for Scientific Research. The *Scientific Research, Communitarian Programmes, Didactic Logistics and Acquired Experience Department*, under the direct subordination of vice-Rector for Scientific Research is designated to manage, support and advise on the research implementation plans developed by the institution's staff or departments, to manage the material resources and to cooperate with other similar structures and institutions, national or international.

The topics provided to the *Scientific Research, Development and Innovation Plan* of the Academy are correlated with the content of bachelor and master fields of study.

### **Students and stakeholders involvement**

In our academy, the students are partners in the academic process, being represented in all management structures (Faculty Council, University Senate, and Council of Administration). In addition, the Senate and Faculty commissions include representatives of the students' community. Students are actively involved in promoting the university by educational and extra-curricular activities, the Corps of Cadets playing an important role in this direction. The functional partnership of the academic management and cadets representatives is developed in specific fields such as: decision making, its implementing and monitoring, and quality control. Important steps have been taken over the last years in order to involve the students into the management process, but there are still some limits due to the special status of our students (being military students, they have to observe specific rules in accordance with the military regulations).

One of the specific features of the educational process in the LFA Sibiu refers to the high level of physical and mental demands addressed to students as future commissioned leaders. The requirements imposed in terms of behaviour, assumed responsibilities and the involvement in their own training process materialize into a strict rigor of the activities. A special characteristic is the doubling of the military students' educational time caused by the development within each academic year of both the periods of time allotted for the academic education, as well as the addition period necessary for the military training. The longer periods of time spent by students in the institution have beneficial effects in terms of the high degree of involvement in the life and the activity of the academic community as well as in managerial activities.

The students' rights and obligations, the procedures for acquiring the status of cadets, the transferring and expelling procedures, as well as the daily performed activities, rewards and sanctions applicable to military students are stipulated in our internal rules and regulations.

LFA Sibiu has a permanent dialogue with the external stakeholders represented by the Ministry of National Defence-Land Forces Headquarters, the Ministry of Administration and Interior - The Inspectorate for Emergency Situations and the Gendarmerie, the Ministry of Justice – Prison Administration, as the main beneficiaries of our graduates, being also actively involved in supporting both the practical modules and the final assessment of military training level, guidance and career counselling.

### **Human Resources**

The LFA Sibiu specific processes and activities are carried out by all members of the academic community - academic and auxiliary staff, both military and civilian. Although the number of students increased constantly over the past five years, the number of academic staff has been preserved within certain limits, the academy management made sustained efforts to maintain a balance between the quality assurance of the academic processes and the financial constraints (Appendix no. 7 - *Student - Staff Analysis*).

LFA Sibiu human resources policy focuses on the encouragement of the excellence in higher education and the development of highly qualified professionals, by doctoral and post-doctoral programmes. The Academy has an annual multi-criteria evaluation system (teaching, research and service performances) for each teaching staff member and as a consequence, the promoting of the teaching staff depends on the evaluation outcomes. This system can be improved taking into account the diversity of the qualifications and the activities performed by the teaching and research staff.

Related to the personal and professional development, LFA Sibiu has implemented a policy of "open doors" towards the European academic experience, supporting exchange programmes for teaching staff and military instructors in European universities within ERASMUS or other programmes.

The teaching positions of the academy are staffed by military and civilian personnel (full and part time) with adequate professional qualifications.

### **Inter-institutional Cooperation**

LFA Sibiu is an important actor at the local, regional and national level, having excellent relations with all

institutions involved in security and defence sectors. We have signed cooperation agreements with all the universities of Sibiu and with most universities of the defence system as well as with other Romanian higher education institutions.

At the same time, we have signed bilateral agreements within ERASMUS Programme regarding the mobility of students and teaching staff as well as national and international agreements in the research area. For example, during academic year 2011-2012 a number of 12 students and 4 teaching staff from LFA Sibiu participated within ERASMUS Programme in universities from Czech Republic, Slovakia, Portugal and Bulgaria and one professor from Brno Defence Academy delivered in our Academy some lectures on Logistics of Czech Republic Army. Within the ERASMUS Programme we are to sign inter-institutional agreements with other military and civilian institutions and starting with this academic year we will begin the cooperation with Land Forces Academy from Wroclaw (Poland) and Theresan Military Academy (Austria).

Furthermore, LFA Sibiu has developed relations within “*European initiative for the exchange of young officers*”- Military ERASMUS, a number of military teaching staff being registered in lecture’s contact database for common educational modules (Common Security and Defence Policy, Communication and Mass-Media, Peace Support Operations, Legal Aspects in Conflict Management).

In accordance with the MND agreements we can also mention some exchange programmes in the field of academic and military training with different institutions such as Saint Cyr Military Academy, The Corps Officers Military Academy (Thessaloniki), West Point Military Academy, and Georgia University (Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency Programme).

We are expecting that the number of mobilities will increase in the next years, given the significant benefits on the quality of the education.

Until now, we did not organize academic teaching modules in English addressed to the foreign students, but starting with the second semester of this academic year, this problem will be solved and we will have participants in these modules at least from the Defence University of Brno (Czech Republic).

Regarding the cooperation in research field, LFA Sibiu has taken part, as coordinator or partner, in developing several projects together with universities or research institutes at local, regional and national level (BioElectroMag<sup>6</sup>, i-DOC<sup>7</sup>, SAR for GMES<sup>8</sup>, e-PLASTICITY<sup>9</sup>, COMTAC<sup>10</sup>, MILCOR<sup>11</sup>, DETDECBRN<sup>12</sup>, ROB MILCAP<sup>13</sup> etc.).

### **Management policy as a reflection of mission and goals**

LFA has a medium term strategic plan which drives annual detailed plans for the implementation of the operational objectives.

The short and medium term plans are elaborated by the Council of Administration and approved by the Senate. Annually, the Rector, as the President of the Council of Administration, has to present a public report on the status of the institution, the level of achievement and the results in accordance with the agreed level of management performance. The achievements are constantly monitored by the internal managerial control and by the permanent commission no. 2 of the Senate.

This high level control process allows for the identification of the measures necessary to eliminate the discrepancies between objectives and achievements and the modalities by means of which the performance one obtains can be valorised.

## **2.2. Academic profile**

As already mentioned in the previous chapters, a comprehensive approach in education and research activities is the base for a sustainable development of LFA Sibiu, aiming to support an integrated management for quality assurance of the education, training and research processes.

The Land Forces Headquarters, in conformity with the evolutions in the national system of higher education and with the transformation directives of the military education system, has formulated the Academy’s mission as follows: building-up commanding officers for all arms/military branches belonging to the Romanian Land Forces, as well as for other institutions within the national defence, public order and national security system, licensed in all study fields and specialties accredited, able to accede, according to the army’s needs and own options within the stage of arm training, able to accomplish missions and to exercise the roles of military leader, warrior, military specialist, educator and citizen in the nation’s service, dedicated to the supreme values: Country, Honour, Duty. The high standards and intense preparation required to succeed in the academic, physical and military programmes provide

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.armyacademy.ro/cercetare/bioelmag/index.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.armyacademy.ro/cercetare/i-DOC/index.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.armyacademy.ro/cercetare/SAR/index.htm>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.armyacademy.ro/cercetare/eplasticity/index.html>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.armyacademy.ro/cercetare/comtac/english/en\\_%20index.html](http://www.armyacademy.ro/cercetare/comtac/english/en_%20index.html)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.armyacademy.ro/cercetare/milcor/prezentare2.html>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.armyacademy.ro/laciddrbc/eng/index.html>

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.armyacademy.ro/cercetare/robomilcap/index\\_en.html](http://www.armyacademy.ro/cercetare/robomilcap/index_en.html)

cadets with the knowledge, skills and expertise that represent the necessary foundation for this unique profession.

### **Analysis of educational activities**

Each study programme developed by the FMM has a well defined structure and content. The courses at bachelor (3 years) and master (2 years) level and the specific curricula define, through a detailed syllabus, the contents, the outcomes, the evaluation methods and credits assigned (according to ECTS). Harmonizing the curricula content is an on-going process, to which the teaching staff and the students are invited to add their contribution.

Using their scientific competences, teaching abilities and their experience, the academic staff is permanently preoccupied to update the subjects' content, to diversify the skills' array to meet the optimum ratio between theory and practice (Appendix no. 8 - *Academic staff analysis*).

The curricular approach of each study programme carried out in the LFA Sibiu is ensured by frameworks of competences designed for graduates, according to the appropriate professional qualifications. These frameworks represent the basis in designing the educational plans and syllabuses, and detail the levels of competences progressively achieved by studying the subjects and getting the corresponding credits (ECTS).

Every subject of the education plan has its own syllabus according to the Methodology to Accomplish the National Frame of Qualifications in the Higher Education, approved by MERYS Order no. 4430/2009 (for the academic component), or an analytic programme (for the military training), setting the objectives, topics, seminars and practical activities, and the minimal requirements to pass.

The curricula content, outcomes and evaluation methods, are presented to the students at the beginning of each semester. Usually, the evaluation process consists of a progressive evaluation and a final one, as well as complementary methods of evaluation (projects, portfolios, individual assignments etc.).

Optional and elective courses are offered, having student-centred learning characteristics. LFA Sibiu stimulates the student-centred education and the continuous improvement of the curricula by new contents, modern didactical tools (multimedia, team working groups, projects, problem-solving based learning) and considering the students' feedback. Moreover, each year we have fruitful meetings with our beneficiaries in order to harmonize the educational outcome with their needs.

The bachelor's degree studies lead to the first rank as an officer (second lieutenant) and provide the access to master university studies, as well as the mandatory Branch Course training for the first position (only for MND graduates). After this mandatory stage, the LFA Sibiu graduates are assigned to MND units and other beneficiaries.

The master study programmes are developed in order to strengthen the competences achieved during the bachelor studies. The scientific research represents an important component of the activities within the master programme and it is performed based on the institutional strategy in the field of scientific research and the medium and short-term programmes. The academic staff try to involve the master students in the elaboration stages of the ongoing research projects by stimulating experimental activities and encouraging the results' validation (including those of dissertation papers). Despite our permanent efforts, we have to mention that a small number of students had publications in journals and proceedings of different conferences, involvement in projects and workshops etc.

### **Analysis of research activities**

The scientific research outcomes have been validated and disseminated by the publication of books, courses, articles in national and international specialty journals and by presentations of the results of different studies at various national and international scientific conferences. Some of these results are published in the Academy's journals, The Land Forces Academy Review, The Land Forces Academy Bulletin and The Land Forces Academy Yearbook. The first two publications were classified in 2010, by CNCS in B+ category, being indexed in international databases EBSCO Publishing Inc. and PROQUEST LLC. As a support for educational process, the Academy's Publishing House (recognized by NURC since 2006) edits books, field manuals, courses, exercise books, guide books etc.

To increase the international visibility, the university management encourages publications in ISI journals with impact factors, and the participation in international scientific events. Yearly, LFA Sibiu organizes international conference and workshops with the participation of personalities from partner universities, researchers and international professional organizations. The main scientific events are the KBO international conference for teaching staff and the international conference SECOSAFT for students. We also mention that the proceedings of KBO 2009 and KBO 2010 are indexed in ISI CPCI and the proceedings of KBO 2011 and KBO 2012 undergo the evaluation process.

Besides these "traditional" scientific events, at the level of the Academy in the last five years a large number of workshops and panels were organized, events that constituted the ideal framework to validate and disseminate the scientific research results. The topic of these workshops and panels were within the scientific fields of interest for the institution and focused on:

- integrated radio communication systems in standard operating environments;



- didactical strategies – components of the educational process;
- modern theories used for the determination of electrical systems' reliability;
- the optimization of capabilities and the scientization of the decisions for supporting the policies in the field of higher education quality;
- human security;
- optimization of the capabilities of the military logistic system.

Our institution considers that the organization of such events represents the ideal framework for the validation and dissemination of the results regarding the scientific research activities.

The scientific events organized by the Academy led to the development of new relations and partnerships with national and international education and research institutions, the exchange of published materials, teachers and scientific researchers and the development of research projects. The outputs of the national and international research projects, the software programmes, equipment and platforms contributed as an added value to the laboratories, hence enabling the performance of scientific research and educational process.

Based on an agreement signed with “Carol I” National Defence University and with “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu the personnel of our institution had full access to scientific review platforms and to bibliographical and bibliometrical databases. Our academy is also part of the ANELIS Plus project. Due to all these achievements, we are aware of the level achieved in the scientific research related to our fields of interest and by making an objective comparison, we are able to identify new research directions and establish new inter-individual and inter-institutional cooperation.

We can affirm that there is a good academic climate and culture centred on research, authorized by the number of research grants and publications. Our research outcomes are appreciated at national level through awards, citations, quotations etc. In addition our publications and other important outcomes are mentioned in international databases. At the same time we have to recognize that in the last years, the economic crises strongly affected the research and development activities, resulting in almost complete lack of research programs at national level, so we have to make great efforts to find alternative financial sources.

The permanent no. 1 and no. 3 commissions of the Senate constantly monitor the achievements and outputs of education and research activities signalling the weak points and highlighting the strong ones.

### **2.3. Academically-related activities**

The Lifelong learning represents one field of activity continuously developed during the last years. Currently LFA offers career courses at different levels for officers in order to be promoted to the next rank or specialized courses for specific fields in accordance to the beneficiary requirements.

Local partnerships with different institutions have been developed all the time, LFA Sibiu having a very good image and excellent relations with local authorities, participating in many common activities: e.g. the satire group *Quo Vadis*, multiple awarded within several contests (Students' National Festival of Satire and Humour, Students' National Festival of Humour “*Ceapa de aur*”, Students' National Festival of Military Humour “*Podul minciunilor*”), “*Nichita Stănescu*” Literary Club, the chorus and dancing groups (folk and modern), the rock band.

The participation of students in scientific circles organized by departments is materialized in the publication of articles and scientific communications presented at different student scientific events. We also mention the articles published by our students in the cadets' magazine *Alma Mater Militaris*.

A successful activity was the organization of a summer school in 2010 with the participation of our cadets and students from the Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest. We also mention the *Back to School* and *The Academy in Schools* projects our students participated in.

The recognition of the prestige of the teaching and research staff of the Academy by the invitations they get to join the scientific boards of certain publications or scientific events, as well as the carrying out of activities within various professional associations is the proof of their professional competence.

In terms of the technological transfer, the academy is not involved in large-scale projects that aim at creating technological platforms in collaboration with other institutions in the country and abroad, but only in specific actions that do not fully capitalize the Academy capacity of the technological transfer.

LFA maintains relations with former students, this being an excellent opportunity to find out news about their achievements. At the same time, there are students who, during vacations, come back to the Academy to share the experiences they have got in various institutions of the EU or NATO (i.e. West Point) with their former colleagues.

The Corps of Cadets, member of the Romanian Students' National Association is involved and actively participates in many activities, being supported by LFA Sibiu in its endeavours. LFA Sibiu students have also attended several competitions in order to obtain different projects, their cultural and social life being a priority (participation as volunteers in The International Theatre Festival, Sibiu 2007- European Capital of Culture, medical care and environmental protection activities etc.).

As military activities are concerned, our students are involved in different ceremonies such as the National Day, the National Flag Day, the National Anthem Day, the National Armed Forces Day etc.

## 2.4 Cadets' military training

To achieve the performance standards set out by the graduate model, which regulates the military component of training, the students of the academy have 10 modules of general and specialized military training, which are carried out in the training firing ranges and branch training centres. They also study planned military training topics one day per week during the academic programme, either in the academy or in the training ranges.

General and specialized military training represent 46.5% of the total hours provided in the curriculum.

General military training aims to make students acquire general military knowledge, training and fighter skills improvement able to carry out individual and team/group battles, as well as build on instructor training and leadership skills, able to assume responsibility for training and leading small military structures (team / squad of fighters and informative platoon) in combat.

Basic individual training has a universal character and provides the basis for military building-up, regardless of the branch and the specialty students will opt for. It covers the three years of study in 8 distinct modules and during one day per week.

General military training subsumes four components: the Training for basic and advanced military skills, the Training for maintaining and developing skills, the Complementary training and the Branch training.

Training for basic and advanced military skills (fighter training competence) takes place during the first year of study, in three distinct modules of military training - M1, M2, M4 (1/2) - and during one day per week.

Additional training (fighter training competence), takes place during the first and second year in three distinct military training modules – M3, M4 (1/2), M6 - and during one day per week as well as in the morning for the first, second and third year, during the university programme.

Training for maintaining and developing skills (individual and collective training to maintain and develop fighting and training instructors and military leader skills) takes place during the second and third year, in three distinct military training modules - M5, M8, M10 - and during one day per week.

Specialized individual training (specialized military training - specialist skills training) aims at initiating students into the chosen branch/specialty. It represents the foundation of the military specialist training and aims at achieving the specific requirements for the first position as an officer.

Specialized individual training (specialized military training, military specialist training skills) takes place during the second and third year. Specialized individual training takes place in the Training Centres of the Branches and subsumes the following components: the Technical Fundamentals of the Branch (separate military training module – M7) and the Tactical Fundamentals of the Branch (separate military training module - M9).

The beneficiaries of our graduates are actively involved in the final assessment of the military training level, by appointing specialists to evaluate the our cadets' skills and capabilities developed during the military training programme. Over the last 3 years, the assessments results for each class are the following: in 2010-*Very Well*, in 2011-*Exceptional* and in 2012-*Exceptional*. According to the military standards *Exceptional* is the highest standard and is based on scores between 9.50 and 10 (*Very Well* meaning scores between 9 and 9.50).

## 2.5. Student support services

LFA Sibiu has a great number of student support services and is permanently trying to improve them and add new ones, according to the strategic objectives. Ensuring adequate education as well as consistent student support is seen as a strategic objective in itself.

Modern laboratories and well-equipped classrooms create a solid support for the future development of our students.

Publication and documentation resources are available through the University library, with basic subscriptions constantly renewed. There is also useful information related to opportunities and services offered by the university, published on the academy website and student website. Students can log in and access learning instruments, and various national and international research papers and journals.

Students have full and open access to bookshelves, a computer search engine being also available for searching purposes; access to the virtual library is ID and password restricted.

The book stock of Romanian and foreign literature integrally meets the requirements of disciplines, students and teaching staff. The library also has subscriptions to Romanian and foreign publications and periodicals.

The IT, library resources, and multimedia infrastructure, are vital for any didactic and research activity. The currently infrastructure available in LFA satisfies the present needs but we will continue to update these resources, and train the technical staff accordingly. It provides the following facilities:

- 5 reading rooms with a seating capacity of 180 places belonging to the University Library and the Self Access Library;
- access to the Internet (Multimedia Room – equipped with 18 computers);
- informational book title search engine;

- virtual library with username and password restricted access;
- bibliographical lists, recently published book lists, on demand bibliography;
- technical support necessary to listen to, study or photo-copy different materials.

The academy has also got a Publishing House, established in 1995, recognized by the National Council of Scientific Research in Higher Education, periodically evaluated (every three years till now). The Publishing House's main function is to ensure the traditional informational teaching support (books, course books, seminar books etc.) and to publish all the other works included in the Annual Editorial Plan elaborated based on suggestions from departments and approved by the Senate.

The informational system of our institution consists of two networks, an INTERNET and INTRAMAN network. All laboratories, study rooms and classrooms provide username-and-password-restricted access to the Internet. Thus, students and teaching staff have permanent access to the virtual library, through a search engine, and to other databases as mentioned in the syllabi.

Another concern of the Academy leadership is the constant investing in increasing the comfort in the students' facilities. Currently, the students' dorms are located in 4 buildings within the university campus, offering accommodation for the total number of the students (100%). Other facilities provided are: students' mess hall with a 900 seating capacity; qualified medical assistance in the medical centre consisting of consultation and treatment room, wards, pharmaceutical warehouse, dentists' office and dental laboratory; psychological and career counselling done by specialized personnel; cultural and entertaining services, through the 6 club rooms covering 296 sqm, equipped with VCR, TV and radio sets, through recreational activities, shows and trips or other extra-curricula activities financially supported by the academy; religious service (the academy has one orthodox chapel); other services through a kiosk selling pastry products and soft drinks.

The sports facilities (sports halls and grounds) are constantly developed. The institution has sport fields, gyms, obstacle courses, and a swimming pool equipped according to the institutional profile, available to students and teaching staff.

The firing ranges and mountain camps have sports facilities such as: physical and psychological building up grounds, football and handball fields, ski slopes, gyms etc (Appendix no. 10 - *Infrastructure*).

The high level of equipment and functionality of available sports resources enabled our institution to organize national and international competitions such as the *National Judo Championship* (editions 2004 - 2008), the *Pentathlon National Military Championship* (editions 2003 - 2009), *Military Sportive Summer Competitions* (editions 2003-2009), the *Military International Triathlon Championship* (2007 edition), *LFA-West Point Cup* (2004 edition) and to provide optimum training conditions for the teams of Steaua Bucharest, Rapid Bucharest, Inter Sibiu etc.

In accordance with Annex no. 2 of Law no.138/1999 the military students get a monthly pay, differentiated on study years. As at the level of the MND there are no normative documents that regulate the system for allocating grants, a proposal on regulating the merit scholarships has been forwarded.

The types of financial aid for bachelor students are materialized in free-of charge goods and service provisions such as:

- Uniform, hygiene materials, school supplies according to the norms specified in L 4/14 *Instructions on the Provision with Equipment and Equipment Materials for the Personnel within the MND*;
- Food according to L 4/1 *Instructions on the Feeding of the MND's Personnel at Peace*;
- Furniture, inventory objects and accommodation materials according to the Order no. 45/29.05.2008 of the MND for the *Approval of Technical Norms for Domains and Infrastructures*.

Moreover, an important support in the career is the students' opportunity to attend free driving courses for categories B and C (cars and trucks).

The students can also benefit of social scholarships, of free-of charge periodical publications and of other services provided by "*Ștefan Gușă*" Foundation and the *Reserved Officers' Association*.

Since the academic year 2006-2007, "*Nicoale Bălcescu*" Award has been given as an acknowledgement and reward for high performances. The award represents the highest honour distinction granted to a military student or graduate of the institution, for outstanding deeds. The financial value of the award is determined by an annual decision of the University Senate. The application criteria for candidates, the procedures for granting the award, as well as other organizational details are mentioned in the *Regulations Regarding the Granting of the "Nicoale Bălcescu" Award*.

## 2.6. Funding

The LFA Sibiu is a military higher education institution financed from the state budget, being a tertiary credit release authority. The Academy has its own income and expense budget for the higher education activity, a fiscal code and an account opened at Sibiu Treasury.

The allocated budget credits have been 100% monthly used, being spent with priority for the payment of the salaries of the employed military and civilian personnel, for the students' training and building-up and for current expenses (food, maintenance and household expenses, materials and functional service provisions, repairs, books, other expenses) and the modernization of the infrastructure, complying with the provisions of Law no. 500/2002 on public finances.

All responsibilities towards the state budget (tax on salary income, contribution to social security, contribution to the budget for social insurances and health and contribution to the unemployment help fund) have been correctly calculated, withdrawn from the source and entirely transferred to destination.

The financial-accounting structure performs its activity according to the legal framework in force, to the orders of the MND, their implementation norms and to the Land Forces Staff's specifications in the field, as well as to the functional responsibilities. The Academy organizes its own accounting; it has an elaborated balance sheet and has a budgeting account which proves the effected expenses made in accordance with the legislation in force, the collected incomes, the destination of incomes and the non-profit character of the institution.

The Academy does not cash in tuition fees for the first cycle of university studies, the students having the benefit of gratuity in the case of training, food, accommodation, social and medical assistance. For the release of scripts, excerpts on school standings, duplicates of study certificates and for the registration in the admission exam, the institution charges fees according to the legal regulations.

In compliance with the stipulations of the MND, the institution does not perform profit-producing economic activities.

The planning, programming and usage of the financial resources have been executed based on the substantiation forms elaborated by the chiefs of departments, authorized by the credit administrators, the officer responsible for resource planning and verified by the chief-accountant, taking in consideration the activities provided in the *Main Activities Plan*, as well as the ones with an administrative character. The purchases of materials and services have been performed according to the *Annual Plan of Public Acquisitions*.

In the context of permanent updates of the income and expense budget we state that the efficient use of allocated credits has been handled with responsibility and professionalism, according to the laws and regulations in force.

The economic-financial audit of the institution is performed by the Internal Audit Directorate of the MND. The results of audit controls are analyzed by the Academy's management and by the managing structures of the MND.

The expenses for salaries' payments for the Academy's personnel do not exceed 65% of the total income, hence assuring a sustainable functioning. Students' tuitions are calculated according to the internal methodology and are made public to the students. The Academy has used at least 30% of the extra-budgetary funds for the institutional development.

The funds allotted through research projects are spent according to the approved budget of each project. All the budget data over the past 5 years are to be found in Appendix no. 9 (Appendix no. 9 - *Funding*).

### **3. QUALITY ASSESSMENT PRACTICES**

"Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy of Sibiu (LFA Sibiu) permanently implements the educational quality improving measures and collaborates with other national and international universities to identify and adopt good practices in the quality fields.

In the LFA Sibiu the main structures involved in the quality management are the following: the *Commission for Evaluation and Quality Assurance*, the *Commission for Internal Managerial Control* and the Senate's permanent commission no. 3 - *Evaluation, educational quality control, ethics and professional deontology*. The objectives of these commissions are to collect relevant data, to identify possible drawbacks that might negatively impact upon quality assurance, and to conceive and implement preventive or corrective measures.

The *Commission for Evaluation and Quality Assurance* accomplishes the functions stipulated in: the *Regulations regarding the Organization and Operation of the Commission for Evaluation and Quality Assurance*, the *Regulations regarding the Organization and Operation of the System for Evaluation and Quality Assurance* and in the *Methodology for the Organization of Internal Evaluation of Education Quality*.

The *Commission for Evaluation and Quality Assurance* is the central entity at the university level, composed by academic staff, students and the beneficiaries' representatives.

Yearly, the commissions established for every bachelor and master programmes draw up Reports of internal evaluation of education quality. These reports are elaborated for each study programmes according to the *Methodology for External Evaluation, Standards, Standards of Reference and List of Performance Indicators* of the RAQAHE, being discussed, completed and amended during dedicated meetings at the departments and faculty level. The main indicators analyzed concerning the education quality are: institutional capacity, educational efficiency, scientific research and quality management.

Based on these particular reports, the Evaluation and Quality Assurance Office within Educational Management Section materializes the internal quality assessment process at institutional level in two annual reports: the *Report regarding the activity of scientific research, development and innovation* and the *Report of the internal evaluation of the quality of education*. After the endorsement by the Senate, both reports become public documents, at the same time being landmarks in the academic quality assurance process for the next period.

The process of internal quality assessment allows an extended analysis and outlines the strengths and the weaknesses of activities, as tools for management decisions. In view of developing and effectively monitoring the education quality, the reports mentioned above stress the facts and suggest appropriate measures to be taken. Thus, the *Commission for Quality Assurance and Evaluation* advances quality improvement, implements control measures and monitors the implementation of the solutions by the management team.

The university management team is aware of the necessity to improve the climate and culture for quality assurance in the LFA Sibiu, involving all institutional levels, from the academic and non-academic staff to the students. At the same time, the Senate's permanent commission no. 3 and Commission for internal managerial control act to achieve and develop a quality culture within the academy.

The current control is the main form of internal managerial control in our institution and is used by the LFA Sibiu management to evaluate the quality assurance at the level of the subordinate structures. This type of control is organized and developed regularly at different managerial levels by observing the specific rules and procedures, and by focusing on certain domains related to the management process, the academy structures and personnel: quality of social environment, performances and risk management, information and communication, control, audit and evaluation. The *Commission for Internal Managerial Control* of LFA Sibiu centralizes the documents of control, identifies and analyzes the sensitive points and possible risks, establishes specific measures and responsibilities, thereby contributing to the implementation of the high quality standards.

Subsequent to the Strategic Plan and part of the *Contract of Management* signed by the Rector, one capstone document is the *System of Management Indicators*, which covers the domains, criteria, general and specific metrics performance associated to the quality assurance at institutional level. Every year, the Rector presents, in the Senate, the "*Report about university status*", which includes all aspects of the university activity, from teaching to research and strategic developments, human resources performances, students, services for the community and financial expenditure. The report, validated by the Senate, represents the feed-back for the decision-making process for the last year and, at the same time, the input considered in the development of the next annual implementation plan.

Heavy dependence on public funding represents a continuous risk of under-financing and consequently of limited progress for LFA Sibiu. Therefore, the management decisions aim at increasing the amount and share of attracted funds. The decisions are formulated by the university Council of Administration, validated by the Senate and implemented at the levels of the faculty's departments.

Related to the quality assurance of education, we also mention that LFA Sibiu has developed inter-university cooperation actions, such as the partnership (with "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu and the Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest) in the project *e-EdU-Quality - System of Quality Management in Higher Education based on e-Tools for Knowledge and Learning*. This project enables our institution not only to acquire the expertise of other higher education institutions but also to disseminate its own results and accomplishments in this field.

#### **4. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND CAPACITY FOR CHANGE**

An Action Plan of the academy for the next period should cover the 7 areas contained in the strategic plan of the "Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy of Sibiu (LFA Sibiu) for the period 2012-2016:

- the institutional management;
- the academic component;
- the military training component;
- the scientific research, development and innovation;
- the human resources;
- the material, financial and informational resources;
- the institutional development.

In order to design a specific Action Plan, a compulsory stage is doing a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and vulnerabilities of the academy.

Based on a rigorous and realistic SWOT analysis, the management structure, together with the academic community, must ensure the institution's optimal achievement of its objectives and mission.

Further on, with an honest and realistic approach, and based on all identified problems in the previous chapters, we try to do a useful SWOT analysis on which to build up an Action Plan.

#### **Strengths**

- accredited as "University of Highest Confidence";
- classified in "B" category;
- bachelor study programmes classified in "A" and "B" category;
- 100% of the graduates are assigned;
- qualified and professionally competent staff;
- curriculum design to meet the needs of beneficiaries (functional feedback);
- university practicum done in structures of the beneficiaries;

- conducting mobility within ERASMUS and European Initiative Programmes;
- modern and adequate educational and research infrastructure;
- co-opting of military specialists in bachelor and master exam commissions;
- access to the platforms of international databases;
- high degree of confidence of the citizens in the military institution (including the training process);
- accredited Publishing House (which ensures the publishing of courses, books, monographies etc.);
- 2 scientific journals in B+ category (indexed in 2 nationally recognized databases);
- international conference with the proceedings indexed in ISI CPCI;
- annual scientific conference of the students;
- free access of the students to all services, facilities and learning resources of the institution;
- high competition at the admission exams (well prepared students).

#### **Weaknesses**

- lack of financial resources to improve the living standards of the academic community;
- weak set of indicators that measures the department, and teaching and research staff performance;
- insufficient involvement of master students in research projects;
- weak legal framework to pay the extra teaching activities;
- dual subordination (MERYs and MND);
- limited offer in online programmes;
- lack of programmes and modules in English;
- absence of doctoral study programmes.

#### **Opportunities**

- promotion of diversified educational offers and consortia/partnerships with similar national institutions;
- development of ERASMUS Programme and the European Initiative for the period 2014-2020;
- access to databases, online libraries, specialized magazines etc. (through ANELIS Plus association);
- possibility to attract extra funding resources (FP 7, SOP etc.);
- open access for civilian students to the bachelor programmes;
- development of programmes and modules in English;
- development of online programmes.

#### **Threats**

- increased competition in the higher education field;
- restructuring of the military education system;
- lack of funds for promoting a long-term policy;
- volatility of the national legal framework (education and labour market fields-hiring qualified personnel);
- significant reduction in financing national research programmes (NPRDI, SPRDI of MND etc.);
- difficulties in accessing research projects.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

The successful implementation of the institutional change requires the correlation of the plans and policies on three main directions: the coordination and correlation of the implementation of actions, assuming the strategy at institutional level and establishing an objective mechanism for monitoring. It is necessary to establish an action plan for the coordination and correlation of the following types of actions:

- normative: updating and developing a set of internal regulations and methodologies in accordance with the national legal provisions;
- administrative: reorganizing and optimizing of the structures and compartments and redefining the relationships between and within them, in accordance with the Strategic Plan and the assumed objectives;
- financial: ensuring and increasing the institutional funding by accessing available national and European funds and particularly by increasing the weight of the Academy's income (extra-budgetary);
- human resources: promoting and developing the human resources.

The success of the Action Plan for organizational improvement depends essentially on the unitary coordination of all types of actions, so that by their amounted effect to ensure the necessary conditions for the planned change. It has to be assumed at the academy level and must be implemented by the executive management and monitored by the Commission no. 2 of the Academic Senate.

The main measures that have to be taken are aimed at improving the management and activities of the Academy, in the following areas:

1. Organizational and functional redesigning of the institutional structures in accordance with the assumed mission and objectives and the rethinking of the informational flow among them;
2. Reconfiguring the organizational structures in order to decrease the hierarchical levels and to increase the performance and responsibility of the management;
3. The internal evaluation and ranking of the departments according to their performance. The Rector is directly responsible for allotting the institution's resources, primarily to the most competitive departments/compartments. Thus, the departments will be subject to rigorous

monitoring, then, the ones that have a poor performance, if they do not significantly improve their performance, will be restructured;

4. Ensuring the total responsibility and autonomy of departments in setting the teaching and research load. Due to the primary orientation for the development of research the possibility of differentiated defining of the loads in a flexible and customized manner;
5. Increasing the weight of the research activities in the evaluation of the master students by changing the syllabi in terms of assessment, as well as the weight of the practical activities to stimulate team work and use of the research infrastructure available in the Academy;
6. Improving the university management by implementing a unified system for information and knowledge management. In order to solve this problem the operability of the e-learning Platform available in the institution must be improved;
7. Developing and implementing a system of indicators and performance criteria for assessing the quality of academic management in close conjunction with life-long education and training, scientific research, partnership with the students, the relationship with the military, economic and social environment, and the professional development of the personnel;
8. Developing and increasing the number of study programmes and the permanent and flexible updating of the curricula and learning contents with reference to the requirements of the beneficiaries;
9. Sustaining and extending national promotion of our academic offer to increase the beneficiaries' interest and to attract a greater number of students by working more closely with the Information and Recruitment Offices;
10. Developing international partnerships for the education and the practicum of the students with universities and organizations operating in different countries of the European Union and NATO;
11. Developing study programmes or modules in English and increasing the compatibility with the study programmes organized and conducted by the partner institutions in the ERASMUS and European Initiative programmes;
12. Intensifying of the efforts of the management structure of the academy at the MND level to implement the legislative framework drawn up by the MERYS both in terms of organization of the academy and human resources, as well as the granting of financial rights for the additional activities performed by the academy.

The points listed above are just the major directions that the entire academic community must follow, these having to be supplemented with other components of the SWOT analysis and correlated with the directions of the 7 areas set out by the Strategic Plan of the institution. In this respect, the threats the "Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy of Sibiu (LFA Sibiu) might face, should be very carefully analysed, one of which being the improvement of human resources management that will be the most difficult to implement and the one that takes more time to show results; after all, the human resources are the ones that make an organization valuable.

As an Educational and Research University, part of the Military Higher Education System, promoting quality education, creativity and excellence in scientific research and institutional collaboration, LFA Sibiu is determined to achieve its strategic goals, accomplish its mission and implement its strategic vision, although operating in a complex and constantly changing environment.

I, Col. Prof. Ghiță BÂRSAN, PhD, Rector of the "Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy of Sibiu, declare that I followed the self evaluation process and read this report and assume responsibility for it.

22.10.2012

