



Press Statement by SRI Director,

Mr. Eduard Hellvig

- March 29, 2017 -

Good afternoon,

Mr. President, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

I am glad to celebrate the 27th anniversary of the Romanian Intelligence Service with you here today. As you already know from my statements at SRI's previous activity review meetings, I will not insist on statistics regarding the manner we have fulfilled our legal prerogatives.

I assume that such things can be learned from the Activity Report submitted to Parliament that will be made public after its examination in plenary session.

Our report is an accurate X-ray of a difficult year, full of challenges that Romania has managed to successfully overcome.

SRI's 2016 Strategy was aimed at keeping away from the country's borders any threat to national security. We undertook measures to deter any illegal actions in areas such as cyber security, counterintelligence, extremism, and organized crime. For instance, about 6,000 measures to deny or ban entry into Romania were taken. In order to support the state's decision-making process, SRI maintained a permanent flow in briefing its legal customers and visibly streamlined the communication channels, considering the significant rise in positive feedback from decision-makers.

In 2016, hundreds of international cooperation activities were carried out and partnership operations and projects were jointly managed. Such endeavors place the Romanian Intelligence Service on an important position internationally.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please take a serious look at the countries neighboring Romania and make a comparison with the security climate in our country. You will find relevant counterexamples - armed conflicts, secessionist movements, terrorism, organized crime, illegal migration or obvious backsliding from the rules of the democratic game. The absence of such threats is also due to the people on whose behalf I am speaking now.

Today, I will talk more about people and the future, about efficiency and accountability, about the projects of the institution I am representing, about the desire of all of us to come up to the values we follow day by day while serving the interests of our citizens.

Two years ago, I took over a strong organization that was reformed and respected by its traditional partners at home and abroad. Now, we have an institution that has changed generations on the fly, dealing today with issues that really matter to Romanians - defending democracy, strengthening the rule of law, and protecting citizens from present-day threats. We have entered a new stage. During my term, I intend to optimize the Service's resources, to manage them effectively and responsibly, and I guarantee you that the process, once started, is irreversible. Modernizing and strengthening our capacities will continue. We have top-level officers and skilled managers who will carry this commitment to its completion.

We want SRI to find, in 2017 and beyond, its rightful place in a democratic society, as intelligence provider to state decision-makers, reliable and timely supplier of early risk warnings, and staunch promoter of national security interests.

I support democracy because Romania can make progress only by observing such values. It is important for the society as a whole that all SRI's activities fall strictly within the Constitution and relevant laws that set clear boundaries within which our institution is required to operate.

We want to further modernize our partnership with government institutions – therefore we undertake efforts for a more transparent oversight model and a more open relationship with Parliament and civil society.

We will be an honest partner of all institutions in order to improve legislation and set an example of efficiency and professionalism. SRI's role and missions have to be permanently in line with the rules of the democratic game. The first steps have already been taken and we will further follow this path ...

I cannot and I refuse to dissociate the State from its citizens. In a democratic society, the way people relate themselves to the State is fundamental to any intelligence service. An intelligence organization's reputation is, in the realm of secrecy, a very important resource for the state.

SRI has a clear mission that needs permanent public support – in order not to give rise to interpretation and speculation. We are an intelligence service and nothing else!

We have a lot to do considering that the future includes many threats. Unfortunately, in 2017, just as in the coming years, intelligence services will be engaged in direct confrontation whose harshness has not been fully felt yet.

Our world is facing major problems, and our analysis points to the fact that the global insecurity level has not reached its peak yet.

We must be on high alert joining our efforts at home and together with our foreign partners against threats stemming from terrorism, espionage, illegal trafficking, cyber or hybrid attacks, and information aggression.

I say “together” because this word will be very important in developing Romania's security capabilities. That is why our slogan this year is “partnership in the service of citizens”. Our program to promote the security culture is aimed at creating the required antibodies within the society in order to thwart subtle forms of aggression that some countries are trying to make use of in their own interest.

Our officers will go increasingly public to explain to people and institutions how they should develop their own measures to protect data and assets, how to secure their connected infrastructures, how to protect themselves against any illegal influence attempts. Our main ally is the ordinary citizen. And an informed citizen is a strong ally!

Our staunch co-support is the law.

I have said it publicly and I repeat it whenever necessary. The society, through its mechanisms, should provide intelligence services with the legal instruments necessary for them to properly operate. We strictly observe the mandate received from decision makers. One should also keep in mind that, in 2017, SRI is required to protect and promote Romania's national security based on a law issued in 1991. Twenty-six years have passed since then, realities have radically changed... *just remember what the Internet was like back then over now...*

From my perspective, it is high time for a broad public debate on a modern package of national security laws - minimally intrusive, stipulating constitutional guarantees for citizens and ethical guidelines, but adapted to challenges we are facing today! The law should protect citizens' rights and freedoms, as well as provide the framework for the State to guarantee those rights and freedoms. Without abuse, according to the Western model, transparent, fair.

The time has also come for an honest partnership between SRI and all state institutions, because I believe that only working as a team we can keep Romania safe from domestic and foreign threats.

Therefore, today I want to firstly thank all Romanian citizens who, in various formulas and situations, individually, and above all observing the law, contribute to protecting Romania's national security.

I would like to thank our domestic and foreign partners for their support in 2016. I want to assure them of a further constructive, open, and reliable partnership.

Last but not least, I assure you, media representatives, of further supporting institutional honesty and transparency, but remember, nevertheless, that SRI remains a secret service.:)

Patria a Priori!

Thank you!