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Risks and Vulnerabilities Generated by Gambling Addiction

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Abstract: In the paper entitled “Risks and vulnerabilities generated by gambling addiction”, we have described the risks and vulnerabilities that gambling addiction generates on MIA missions and on the classified information handled. The scientific approach is based on the premise of the security awareness in which we must recognize the importance of the checks carried out by the intelligence services in the process of granting access to classified information, as well as their contribution to national security. However, the gambling phenomenon has grown in Romania, a situation in which it could have a negative impact in the circumstances of a possible addiction, including among MIA’s personnel.

Keywords: information services; public policies; security; cooperation; security awareness; policy factors; clearance for access to classified information; security checks

1. MIA’s Missions and the Clearance for Access to Classified Information

The personnel of the Ministry have access to information classified as trade secrets, based on GD no. 781 of 2002³ on the protection of trade secrets information, and to classified information from the state secret class, based on GD 585 of 2002⁴, for the approval of the National Standards for the Protection of Classified Information in Romania, the level of Top Secret of Particular Importance (TSPI), Top Secret (TS) and Secret (S). The clearance on access to such information within MIA, is granted by the specialized structure of the Ministry, namely the General Directorate of Internal Protection (D.G.P.I.), following the checks carried out on the applicant, only with his written consent.

Under the Law no. 182 of 2002⁵ on the protection of classified information, the national system of protection of information was established, regulating the access to such information.

Thus, the main objectives of the protection of classified information are: to protect them against espionage, being compromised or unauthorized access, alteration or modification of their content, as well as against sabotage or unauthorized destruction, but also to achieve the security of information systems and of transmission of classified information.

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³ Published in the Official Journal, Part I, no. 575 of 05.08.2002.

⁴ Published in the Official Journal, Part I, no. 485 of 05.07.2002.

⁵ Published in the Official Journal, no. 248 of April 12, 2002.

In the context of measures to protect classified information, it is imperative to prevent unauthorized access to such information, to identify the circumstances, as well as persons who, by their actions, may endanger the security of classified information, to ensure that classified information is distributed exclusively to persons entitled, under the law, to know them, to ensure the physical protection of the information and of the personnel necessary for the protection of classified information.

Obtaining and holding the clearance of access to classified information from the class of trade secrets or state secrets is a mandatory condition stipulated in the job description of each MIA employee.

D.G.P.I., the specialized structure within MIA, carries out “intelligence, counterintelligence and protection activities in order to identify, prevent and counter threats, vulnerabilities and risk factors that can lead to serious disturbance of public order or which concern the information, property, personnel, missions, decision-making process and operational capacity of MIA structures”¹, and ensures "coordination and control of activities for the protection of national classified information, of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and of the European Union, as well as for cybersecurity, within MIA structures"²

MIA personnel, according to the entity they are employed, carry out specific missions in accordance with the job description.

From the Institutional Strategic Plan (ISP) 2021-2024³ of MIA derive three strategic objectives that govern the entire activity as follows:

- 1) Ensuring a high degree of safety of persons and protection of property, covering the activity area of MIA dedicated to maintaining public order and security and border security.
- 2) Increasing the capacity of MIA to manage major events, aimed at streamlining the management of emergency situations.
- 3) Increasing the efficiency and administrative capacity of MIA, a cross-cutting objective, aimed both at achieving an increased efficiency of the services offered to citizens by MIA and providing support to the operational structures.

Thus, the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police (I.G.P.R.), through specific missions, prevents and combats crimes against the person, against the property, to the regime of weapons and ammunition, nuclear materials, as well as organized crime on the line of human trafficking (an aspect that often degenerates into sexual exploitation, through work or begging), drug trafficking (activity that is also supported by the National Anti-Drug Agency by providing documents to analyze the phenomenon of drug use), cybercrime (an aspect aimed at combating cybercrime with electronic means of payment against the confidentiality and integrity of payments), as well as the financing of terrorism and money laundering.

Also, a very important aspect is that of combating the main causes of road accidents in the context of the high number of serious road events leading to the death of people.

The General Inspectorate of Border Police (I.G.P.F.R.) supervises the control of the state border crossing, in order to combat the fraudulent crossing of the state border and the crimes related to the

¹ Art. 10, letter (a) of the GEO no. 76 of November 2, 2016, on the establishment, organization and functioning of D.G.P.I within MIA, published in the Official Journal, no. 891 of November 08, 2016.

² Ibid., Article 10, letter b.

³ <https://www.mai.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/sinteza-PSI.pdf>, accessed on 11.09.2022.

smuggling of immigrants. At the same time, they prevent and combat the illegal stay and undeclared work of third-country nationals.

At the level of the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Gendarmerie (I.G.J.R.) it is aimed to reduce the number of antisocial acts committed in the street segment by ascertaining the facts, identifying the authors, the injured persons, the witnesses and handing over the perpetrators to the competent bodies for further investigations.

2. Risks and Vulnerabilities to MIA Missions and of Classified Information Handled in the Context of Gambling Addiction

Gambling Addiction

Regardless of the types of gambling (poker, blackjack, roulette, sports betting, casino, etc.), addiction has negative repercussions on the life of each individual, which are reflected in both personal and professional life.

Gambling addiction seems to follow a trajectory similar to that of the disorder generated by the consumption of prohibited substances, which manifests itself including through periods of abstinence and relapse.

Most people with gambling disorders require psychiatric hospitalization due to depression and sometimes suicidal ideation caused by financial losses.

Research on people in gambling treatment centers found that 48% of individuals reported having a gambling-related suicide idea at some point.

The often-overwhelming financial consequences, such as bankruptcy, associated with gambling disorder can also contribute to the attempted or completed suicide¹.

Gambling addiction is mainly generated by the player's permanent desire to win, in the hope that it could make a profit, but also because of beliefs that are long internalized by the person in question.

Also, the person who is unable to stop the behavior of betting and playing all the money available, begins to dispose of / pawn personal assets, and, subsequently, to request large amounts of money from acquaintances and then from people who have illicit concerns, namely usury.

The risks of gambling addiction develop depression associated with other addictions such as alcohol or drugs, which are self-induced mechanisms designed to prevent anxiety and compulsive gambling.²

Through gambling addiction, a maladaptive behavior develops, that has the chance to become persistent and recurrent with the possibility of generating the following behaviors³:

- Constant preoccupation with the chance to win and with reliving past gaming experiences concurrently with thoughts of the next ways to acquire sums of money.
- The need to play increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement
- Plays to escape problems or to ease feelings of vulnerability, guilt, anxiety or depression.

¹ https://noaddict-clinica.ro/dt_procedure/dependenta-de-jocuri-de-noroc/, accessed on 01.09.2022.

² <https://smartliving.ro/dependent-de-jocuri-de-noroc/>, accessed on 11.09.2022.

³ <https://clinica-aliat.ro/jocuri-de-noroc/>, accesat la 11.09.2022.

- It hides the extent of involvement in pathological gambling
- Commits acts of a criminal nature, i.e. theft, fraud, embezzlement in order to obtain the necessary sums of money.

3. The Risks Generated to MIA Missions, arising from the Addiction of Personnel to Gambling

Considering the missions of MIA and the ISP during 2021 – 2024, in the context of a generalized phenomenon of gambling addiction throughout Romania, as well as in the hypothetical and gloomy scenario in which MIA's personnel would be constantly concerned with accessing gambling, we will describe some generating risks to specific missions.

Thus, at the level of I.G.P.R., in terms of combating road events resulting in victims and the factors that generate road events, respectively the failure to comply with the maximum legal speed allowed on the road sector on which they are traveling, the police officer whose mission is to detect and sanction drivers who violate the legal provisions in force and is a gambling addict who has accumulated debts that exceed the possibilities of his monthly salary income, could become a victim of his own addictions by requesting and obtaining sums of money from the respective drivers, in order not to apply the legal measures.

In the same context, there is a risk that people who have exceeded the maximum speed allowed on the road sector they were traveling to be under the influence of alcoholic beverages or narcotic substances, and precisely in order to avoid the opening of a criminal case, to insist on providing significant amounts of money. After accepting the amount of money, the car drivers would continue their journey, and in the context of a moment of inattention and under the influence of alcoholic beverages or prohibited substances, to produce a road event resulting in the death of several people.

In this context, not only would we be faced with the impossibility of reducing road phenomena that generate victims, but citizens, accustomed to non-compliance with the legal norms, would be encouraged, being aware of the corruptible nature of MIA personnel on the background of personal addictions.

Another situation contrary to maintaining and promoting a climate of stability by MIA, amid a possible addiction to gambling of the police officers who are investigating criminal cases concerning criminal groups that have as object drug trafficking, would be that of the dissemination of data and information not intended for publicity or classified, regarding the specific activities carried out within the respective structure.

Thus, members of the criminal group could easily identify MIA personnel who are involved in gambling activities, either online or in special locations, and in order to attract them to their side, they could provide significant sums of money to the MIA personnel, on the basis of momentary and disinterested support, so that, later, when they become bankrupt, to exploit them in their personal or group interest.

In this context, the members of the criminal group, in order not to generate a revulsion to the target police officer, could ask him a favor, apparently insignificant, under the pretext of a current and real situation, such as to run a check in the databases of MIA and to provide them with a home address or vehicle owner details.

Given the previous support given to the MIA employee, as well as the good intentions expressed by the member of the criminal group through the submitted request, the police officer would comply with the

request, would access, in the interest of the member of the criminal group, the requested data and would provide it to him.

Subsequently, over a longer period of time, the member of the criminal group could ask the MIA employee for an urgent meeting and ask him for the money previously offered as a loan, under the pretext that a member of a criminal group is asking for the amounts of money that he would have taken on behalf of the police officer, knowing that he is bankrupt.

Given that the police officer could not return him the amount of money, the member of the criminal group requests, instead of the debt, data from a criminal file that targets exactly the member of the criminal group who would have lent him the money.

Although the police officer will initially refuse to provide data and information from criminal cases, the person requesting it, reminds him that, in addition to the sums of money borrowed, he has, in the past, also carried out checks in the databases and provided them, situation in which he was recorded audio and video, threatening him also, that if he does not provide the data requested, the recordings will be provided to the press, a situation in which an internal investigation will be triggered, which could culminate in withdrawal of the clearance to access classified information, for accessing MIA databases and the dissemination of data and information not intended for publicity or classified.

In this situation, the provisions of Law no. 360 of 2002 on the Statute of the Police Officer could be violated¹, law which provides that the police officer: “must keep the trade secrecy, as well as the confidentiality of data learned during carrying out of the activity, under the law, except in cases where the performance of the work duties, the needs of justice or of the law require their disclosure”²; and “must have a correct conduct, not to abuse the official capacity and not to compromise, through his public or private activity, the prestige of the position or the institution to which it belongs”³, as well as the provisions of Art. 303⁴ or 304⁵ of the Criminal Code.

4. Conclusions

Although the phenomenon described is far from generating risks to MIA missions, it should be borne in mind that new persons employed within MIA, being still at a young age, may already be gambling addicts since the age of 16-18 years. Thus, their main concerns, namely gambling, could go unnoticed within the human resources structures, as gambling is a socially accepted and taxed phenomenon, and the performance of checks on the amounts of money they use for the purpose of satisfying the addiction are not verified.

¹ Published in the Official Journal no. 440 of June 24, 2002.

² Law no. 360 of 2002, Article 42, letter (a).

³ *Ibid.*, letter (d).

⁴ Disclosure of state secret information.

⁵ Disclosure of trade secrets or non-public information.

5. Proposals for Managing Possible Risks to Classified Information and to MIA Missions Generated by Gambling Addiction

- 1) Requesting candidates participating in admission competitions within MIA, both for direct employment and for enrollment in educational units, of an account statement for the last 12 months from the banks where the candidate has accounts, as well as detailing the reasons for any possible loans.
- 2) Conducting checks, through the National Office for Gambling (ONJ), to identify possible situations, in which the future MIA employee closed its bank accounts before participating in the competition, precisely in order not to be able to provide the requested account statement.
- 3) In the case of MIA employees who are addicted to gambling, providing the necessary support, through the psychological support structures of MIA and, temporary, removal from activities that could endanger specific missions.

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