

## MANAGEMENT AND ADAPTATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES TO THE CURRENT NEEDS OF SPECIAL STATUS PUBLIC OFFICIALS

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**Rezumat.** *Human resource management, in the integrated systemic approach of the modern organization, is one of the most important aspects of organizational management since human resources are a vital source of energy for the institution, arguably its most important resource. Effective human resource management can directly lead to increased job satisfaction, positive motivation, loyalty to the institution, significant adherence to the institution's vision and mission, and the establishment of a conducive working climate. All these factors contribute, provided other conditions are met, to the efficiency of the organization in achieving its objectives.*

**Abstract.** *The questionnaire survey conducted among 172 respondents from Romanian Customs Authority (RCA) demonstrates the significant importance of this profession, which confers a special status and highlights the interest in the continuous improvement of career management activities in relation to the needs of public officials with special status. This is done from the perspective of a global approach to customs activities, focused on a proactive approach to address geopolitical challenges, but especially the advancement of technology and artificial intelligence.*

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## 1. Human Resources of the Customs System

### *1.1 The Customs System*

The Romanian customs system is a component of the European Union (EU) customs system. The creation of the European Union was based on a common customs policy. For the application of this common customs policy, it was deemed necessary to develop norms and procedures that are applied uniformly and consistently in all customs within the union space. The provisions of customs legislation are contained in the Union Customs Code. To ensure the uniform and consistent application of customs procedures, the electronic processing of customs information was deemed necessary. Currently, the electronic customs declaration is the norm, and the paper customs declaration is the exception. Simplified and computerized customs procedures are necessary for facilitating trade and combating fraud. To protect the interests of the union and European citizens, it is essential to apply modern customs controls and surveillance using the most advanced analysis methods [1].

Customs also play an important role in protecting the external borders of the European Union. Customs legislation contains the general rules and procedures that ensure the application of tariff measures and other common trade policy measures related to trade in goods between the European Union, seen as a distinct entity, and third countries. Customs regulations protect the financial interests of the European Union. All these are based on the fact that the customs union is an exclusive competence of the EU and that union law prevails over other regulations in this matter [3-5].

The use of information technology and the elimination of paper customs documents help facilitate trade and improve the efficiency of customs controls. Ensuring electronic communication between economic agents and customs and creating a paperless working environment are goals of the EU and customs authorities. Customs authorities are responsible for overseeing the Community's international trade, thus contributing to fair and open trade. The mission of the customs authority primarily focuses on the following aspects: a. protecting the financial interests of the Union and its member states; b. protecting the Union from unfair and illegal trade and encouraging legitimate economic activities; c. ensuring the security and safety of the Union and its residents, and environmental protection, in close cooperation with other authorities, if necessary; d. maintaining an appropriate balance between customs controls and facilitating legitimate trade [5-8].

Currently, the Romanian Customs Authority was established by Law no. 268/2021 as a specialized body of the central public administration in the customs field, by taking over from the National Agency for Fiscal Administration and its subordinated units the activity, positions, and personnel of the customs structures.

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Under its subordination, there are seven Regional Directorates without legal personality – Bucuresti, Braşov, Cluj, Craiova, Galaţi, Iaşi, Timişoara. The structure of the Regional Customs Directorates includes 90 customs offices - 53 border customs offices and 37 internal customs offices [2-6].

## **1.2 SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CUSTOMS PERSONNEL**

According to the provisions of the Administrative Code approved by Emergency Ordinance 59/2019, with subsequent amendments and provisions, the customs authority is a special activity that involves exercising public power prerogatives, and customs personnel benefit from a special status, formalized since 2004 through Government Emergency Ordinance No. 10 – Status of Customs Personnel [3].

From a demographic perspective, over 60% of customs personnel are around 55 years old. This significant aging phenomenon of this personnel category correlates with a peak in their professional career, but also with significant aspects concerning health and physical integrity.

Career development for customs personnel becomes a priority in the context where challenges are global, and customs is one of the most important actors of the European Union. One of the essential factors in preparing society and the state for future challenges is the development of the capabilities of the intelligence community. The ability to collect necessary data and information about the adversary's intentions, while simultaneously protecting one's own informational resources, is essential for making quality and timely decisions. Examples include modern conflicts and wars that confirm the extreme importance of using intelligence during various forms of action (both offensive and defensive). Besides the crises of recent years – Brexit, the pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine – which the Union had to face, with member state customs authorities being at the forefront of rapid response, this union of sovereign states must adapt and prove its efficiency in an economy heavily impacted by digitalization and e-commerce.

Human resource management means aligning the institution's human capital with the activity plan, so that the institution can fulfill its mission. This is the first step – the foundation of the recruitment process. Furthermore, it is the first link to the competency framework – ensuring that the institution correctly identifies the necessary profiles (in terms of general and specific competencies). The result of successful workforce planning usually involves changes to the current workforce (mobility, succession, training, etc.) and, where appropriate, the recruitment of individuals to meet institutional needs. Strategic workforce planning typically has long-term applicability and focuses on identifying critical positions and strategic competencies needed to achieve future objectives. Operational workforce planning is usually short-term (annual or less) and focuses on immediate personnel and competency needs [7-9].

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Promoting and approving amendments to the status of customs personnel according to the complexity and responsibility of customs personnel as the first guardians of the Customs Union and the Single Market (including eliminating discrimination between the rights of customs personnel and the rights of other personnel with special status) becomes a goal to ensure that this category of personnel benefits from specific levers of their function in addition to their great responsibilities [9-10].

Several aspects are essential in the career development of customs officials [2-8] to ensure their mission at the European level is fulfilled:

- **Digitalization:** Digital technology is transforming our lives. The goal of the EU's digital strategy is for this transformation to benefit citizens and businesses and contribute to creating a climate-neutral Europe by 2050. A comparative analysis of existing systems for evaluating the activities of customs authorities in EU countries is conducted, implying the need to unify and standardize customs operations and procedures, as well as customs administration in general. The Commission is determined to turn this period into the "digital decade" of Europe. The Union must strengthen its digital sovereignty and set its own standards rather than follow those of others, with a clear focus on data, technology, and infrastructure.

One of the objectives is to simplify procedures for the business environment, which has been realized through a series of digitalization projects funded by both European and national funds. Ensuring the harmonization of processes for customs formalities as well as the possibility for economic operators to submit documents electronically as provided by customs legislation through developed electronic customs systems, the projects respond to the objective assumed at the institutional strategy level. Considering that the developed projects propose the development of electronic systems capable of providing updated information that will allow automatic checks on their accuracy and implicitly automatic control of economic operators conducting customs operations within the EU, this addresses the specific priority objective of increasing collection efficiency by optimizing activity processes and ICT development. Furthermore, the electronic submission of documents provided by customs legislation by economic operators contributes to achieving the specific objective of focusing on remote services by extending electronic services offered to the business environment, as assumed at the strategy level [6-10].

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 ORGANIZATION OF THE RESEARCH

The study involved conducting a questionnaire survey on a sample of 172 employees within this institution. The research comprised three stages: the first

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two stages delineated the aspects investigated and the methodology, while data collection took place in May 2024. The aim is a mixed quantitative and qualitative analysis to support the development of human resources with special status based on identified needs, correlating them with the most challenging aspects—new discoveries in science and technology, artificial intelligence, and geopolitical challenges. It should be noted that this profession is significantly impacted primarily by any political changes that involve commercial or protectionist measures, given that the customs role is dual in protecting society and its citizens while facilitating legitimate trade and commercial exchanges. Additionally, the impact of information technology on this institution, where the electronic processing of customs declarations is over 99%, and the union's goal of exclusive electronic communication between authorities and economic operators and creating a paperless work environment, as well as the diversity of products that are continuously developed and must undergo customs clearance, must be considered.

The first stage involved delineating the aspects to be investigated, specifically identifying the main components of human resource management within the institution, focusing on developing a flexible professional development system for employees adapted to the needs of the institution and the ongoing challenges faced by the customs institution. Discussions with specialists within the institution, analysis of relevant data, and documentation of specialized literature were also carried out at this stage to better evaluate the most important aspects of human resource management. The second stage of the study involved constructing the procedure and method for applying the questionnaire. The final stage of the study consisted of research conducted in May 2024. The conclusions obtained from the data analysis focused on analyzing the existing situation and forecasting possibilities for improving the career management of public officials with special status in direct relation to the innovative nature of their profession.

## **2.2 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

The hypothesis of the study is as follows: there is a high degree of compatibility between the professional needs of employees and the needs of the organization, but a more flexible approach to career management, where the staff feels directly involved, will lead to greater job satisfaction and increased loyalty to the institution.

## **2.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Research objectives:

1. Identifying the degree of compatibility between the employee and the institution across various dimensions;
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2. Analyzing staff motivation regarding work and career development needs from the perspective of public officials with special status;
3. Developing a career management system responsive to the needs induced by the institution's staff and current challenges.

## **2.4 METHODS USED**

The chosen method was the questionnaire survey, selected because it allows for the construction of an instrument that comprehensively reflects employees' career development needs, which can be met at the institutional level. The predominantly quantitative method was complemented by qualitative methods, such as the analysis of programmatic documents, participatory observation within the structure, and unstructured interviews with public officials with special status, which provided extremely valuable qualitative information for our research.

## **2.5 DEVELOPED RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

Following specific documentation, the following dimensions related to human resources issues were identified and objectified in questions, most with predefined answers to facilitate self-administration:

- Analysis of the structure and age of the institution's staff;
- Compatibility between the individual's potential and the institution's expectations;
- Career management;
- Customs officials with a European mission.

## **2.6 SAMPLE SELECTION**

The questionnaire was self-administered and distributed electronically. Given the method of application, the questionnaire is simple, easy to understand, and use, leading to a low non-completion rate. It was posted on a public group with 530 members, of which 172 voluntarily chose to respond.

# **3. DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS**

## **3.1 Analysis of the Structure and Age of the Institution's Staff**

From the questionnaire applied to 172 respondents employed within AVR and the processed statistical data, it appears that the staff employed in AVR is aging, with the percentage of such staff increasing, only 0.6% of respondents being aged between 18 and 25 years. The questionnaire was applied in Romanian language using the Google Form platform. We wish to highlight an important issue that could affect the future activities of our institution. We observed that a significant portion of our staff is aging and approaching retirement age. This could create

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major difficulties in the optimal functioning of the unit if we do not take preventive measures in time, Figure 1.

Given that the labor market is increasingly competitive and attracting new qualified employees can be challenging, it is essential to initiate a succession and rejuvenation plan for the staff. Furthermore, the rapid advancement of technology and IT requires continuous updating of our skills to remain competitive and efficient. New technologies offer significant opportunities but also challenges, so it is essential to prepare our staff to face these transformations.

15.Varsta						
1.De cat timp sunteti angajat at AVR		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
>15 ANI	Valid	>56 ani	45	39.5	39.5	39.5
		36-45 ani	15	13.2	13.2	52.6
		46-55 ani	54	47.4	47.4	100.0
		Total	114	100.0	100.0	
1-5 ANI	Valid	>56 ani	3	8.6	8.6	8.6
		18-25 ani	1	2.9	2.9	11.4
		26-35 ani	8	22.9	22.9	34.3
		36-45 ani	9	25.7	25.7	60.0
		46-55 ani	14	40.0	40.0	100.0
		Total	35	100.0	100.0	
10-15 ANI	Valid	26-35 ani	1	11.1	11.1	11.1

36-45 ani	Valid	36-45 ani	1	11.1	11.1	22.2
		46-55 ani	7	77.8	77.8	100.0
		Total	9	100.0	100.0	
5-10 ANI	Valid	>56 ani	1	9.1	9.1	9.1
		26-35 ani	3	27.3	27.3	36.4
		36-45 ani	3	27.3	27.3	63.6
		46-55 ani	4	36.4	36.4	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0			
MAI PUTIN DE 1 AN	Valid	36-45 ani	1	33.3	33.3	33.3
		46-55 ani	2	66.7	66.7	100.0
		Total	3	100.0	100.0	

**Fig.1.** Demographic data of the respondents

From the analysis of public information, it is observed that the following dysfunctional aspects have been noted on the public agenda:

- Insufficient staff in some customs offices
- Uneven workload distribution
- High level of danger in exercising the profession - According to Article 26 of the Romanian Customs Code, customs personnel, in the exercise of their duties, benefit from the special protection provided by law for police officers and, according to Article 27, have the right to carry a weapon. Currently, even customs inspectors in the most dangerous workplaces, such as mobile teams or physical inspection teams at Romania's external state border, are not equipped with firearms.

At this moment, we can consider that the most relevant characteristics of this category of personnel are that they apply union customs legislation in cooperation with other public institutions, not being a law enforcement body in the strict sense of the word. Their objectives are focused on the specific mission conferred by the customs' protective role, complemented by tax collection objectives, which are becoming increasingly relevant for the EU, and in correlation with their role according to national legislation in the field of excisable products, they act as public guardians at Romania's borders.

### **3.2 Compatibility between Individual Potential and Institutional Expectations**

Compatibility between human resources and the organization represents an important premise for developing a successful relationship between the two, leading to organizational efficiency and a strongly positive motivation for the employee. In this dimension, we aimed to identify indicators such as:

**Compatibility between personal values and those promoted by the work group** is considered in the specialized literature dedicated to organizational psycho-sociology as a necessary condition for structuring a homogeneous work group with a high degree of cohesion and a stimulating climate. Perceiving the work climate positively is based more on affective and behavioral aspects than cognitive ones, which refers directly to the axiological model. The work group represents a purpose-built group to achieve the institution's objectives, but much more complex processes develop at this level, as employees spend a lot of time together and share many experiences at work, becoming true belonging or reference groups.

**Analyzing the data**, we observed that individuals with more than 15 years of experience consider there is the greatest compatibility between personal values and those promoted by their work group. The results actually reflect a double adaptation of the individual to the organization and the organization to its human resources, creating the premises for increased stability in the public function.

**The issues faced by human resources in the Romanian Customs Authority**, as seen by the surveyed employees, can provide clues about the less functional aspects that may affect their performance in the institution, as well as the institution's overall performance. The possible responses listed by the research organizers attempted to exhaust the universe of problems that could threaten the efficient functioning of the organization but also allowed respondents to provide their own perception of reality.

**The mentioned aspects received a lot of choices**, indicating that all listed aspects are priority concerns for the interviewees and that listing them in a set of priorities is correct, reflecting a realistic perception of reality. These aspects require attention not only from the institution's management but also from the entire administration, which must function, and even from civil society and the media to support the achievement of the ambitious objectives of the customs union.

**Priorities that human resource management should consider** for improving efficiency in the Romanian Customs Authority represent an analysis of the measures that the surveyed individuals believe management should take to address the mentioned problems. It is also a way to correlate the attitudinal level with the behavioral one; employee dissatisfaction is often at the declarative level, with employees and employers oriented towards destructive criticism without

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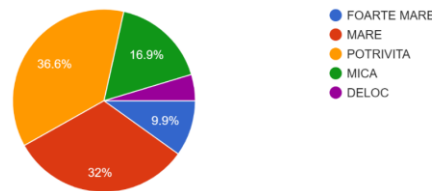


offering alternatives. The study aims to capture the actions desired to address the reported problems while allowing subjects to identify their own priorities.

**The aspects identified in this item correlate very strongly with those from the previous item**, with problematic aspects being priorities in terms of conditions that can significantly contribute to organizational efficiency.

**Job satisfaction on a numerical scale** represents an objective, concrete, non-invasive method of probing the internal universe of employees. The question is correlated with previous questions because we are fully aware that the level of satisfaction depends on many organizational factors as well as subjective factors related to the employee's profile.

5. In ce masura va declarati satisfacuti fata de locul de munca pe care il ocupati in prezent? Bifati varianta potrivita.  
172 responses



**Fig.2.** The job satisfaction

The degree of job satisfaction varies greatly depending on experience, with newly hired employees being much more satisfied with their jobs than more experienced employees, who have higher frequencies in the middle of the scale, meaning they are partially satisfied. This is natural given their more complex understanding of their own activities.

A stimulating work atmosphere is one of the organizational factors that can facilitate or, on the contrary, negatively affect employees' activities. Although we used a predominantly quantitative method, our approach is qualitative, aiming to capture the most intimate aspects that underlie employee satisfaction and motivation.

Responses regarding the level of stimulation felt are closely related to problems and priorities, showing a connection between employee needs, their objectives, and institutional objectives.

Work orientation is relevant for clearly identifying employees' work profiles, as it is known that approaching one's career in a dynamic and integrated manner is based on several core values. This prevents public servants from becoming overly dependent on the direct supervisor's appraisal, reaffirming the importance of participative and effective management in this organization and indicating that employees benefit from such an environment.

### 3.3 Career Management

A career represents the entire professional trajectory of an individual, not just a segment of the active working period. Career management must follow multiple directions; it is not univocal and is not new in the processes carried out by human resources departments. This subprocess represents the management of an individual's professional life by the institutions where they work from the moment they are hired until the end of their career, which coincides with either retirement or career change. According to the data obtained about the employees of the Romanian Customs Authority (AVR), they consider their professional trajectory within the institution to be a career.

8. Do you believe that your professional trajectory represents what can be called a career? Check the appropriate option in the column on the right.

1. How long have you been employed by AVR?	15. Age			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
>15 years	>56 years	Valid	I worked with pleasure and put my soul into what I did without thinking about a particular career	1	2.2	2.2
			YES	27	60.0	60.0
			I just work, I never thought for a moment that I was pursuing a career	5	11.1	11.1
			Mostly yes	3	6.7	6.7
			NOT	8	17.8	17.8
			You cannot make a career in improper conditions. I like what I do. both	1	2.2	2.2
			Total	45	100.0	100.0
	36-45 year	Valid	YES	8	53.3	53.3
			I just work, I never thought for a moment that I was pursuing a career	1	6.7	6.7
			NOT	6	40.0	40.0
			Total	15	100.0	100.0
	46-55 years	Valid	YES	37	68.5	68.5
			I just work, I never thought for a moment that I was following a career	6	11.1	11.1
			NOT	11	20.4	20.4
			Total	54	100.0	100.0
1-5 YEARS	>56 years	Valid	Yes	3	100.0	100.0
	18-25 years	Valid	Yes	1	100.0	100.0
	26-35 years	Valid	Yes	6	75.0	75.0
			No	2	25.0	25.0
	Total	8	100.0	100.0		
	36-45 years	Valid	Yes	7	77.8	77.8
			No	2	22.2	22.2
			Total	9	100.0	100.0
	46-55 years	Valid	Yes	8	57.1	57.1
			I just work, I never thought for a moment that I was pursuing a career	4	28.6	28.6
			NOT	2	14.3	14.3
			Total	14	100.0	100.0
10-15 YEAR	26-35 years	Valid	Yes	1	100.0	100.0
	36-45 years	Valid	Yes	1	100.0	100.0
	46-55 years	Valid	Yes	5	71.4	71.4
			I just work, I never thought for a moment that I was pursuing a career	1	14.3	14.3
			No	1	14.3	14.3
Total	7	100.0	100.0			
5-10 YEARS	>56 years	Valid	Yes	1	100.0	100.0

	26-35 years	Valid	Yes	2	66.7	66.7
			NU	1	33.3	33.3
			Total	3	100.0	100.0
	36-45 years	Valid	Yes	2	66.7	66.7
			No	1	33.3	33.3
			Total	3	100.0	100.0
	46-55 years	Valid	Yes	3	75.0	75.0
			I just work, I never thought for a moment that I was pursuing a career	1	25.0	25.0
			Total	4	100.0	100.0
<1 year	36-45 years	Valid	I just work, I never thought for a moment that I was pursuing a career	1	100.0	100.0
	46-55 years	Valid	Yes	2	100.0	100.0

**Motivation** – The goal is to align employee expectations with the profile of activities within the Romanian Customs Authority (AVR). These aspects are relevant both from a motivational standpoint and for the potential to attract specialized personnel or those eager to specialize and commit to the organization. An employee's potential loyalty to the institution, regardless of whether they are new or experienced, enables the improvement of skill development programs, training, and discovering the employees' potential.

From the responses given by the surveyed officials, it appears that they are most motivated by their choice of the institution's profile, indicating a high degree of attachment to its values and mission, which provides a highly relevant development space.

**Own Career** – This item captures the depth of the professional relationship an employee has with the institution they work for. Although this is not immediately evident, if an individual knows they are pursuing a career, they understand that they have a long-term professional commitment to any institution they work for. Additionally, the option for respondents to provide an open-ended response is an opportunity for the specialist interpreting the data to identify any discrepancies between the individual's perception and the information they have received. If it is merely a language discrepancy, it can be corrected with the help of human resources specialists. If the difference in perception is deeper, such as at the level of professional training (or lack thereof), appropriate measures must be taken by human resources.

Most respondents considered their activity to be a career rather than just a job, leading to higher expectations, which correlate positively with their experience in the institution.

Those with the most experience also reported having the strongest positive intrinsic motivation, wanting to work for this institution in the spirit of its values and mission to which they have adhered.

**Most Important Training Areas** – The hierarchy applied to the areas where professional development is desired allows for the completion of the annual professional training plan, the information obtained during the annual individual performance evaluations, and the real desires of the employees. It is a fairly

objective reflection of the professional training needs of special status officials, and this report aims to support the human resource's structure and decision-makers in meeting the training needs, as the strategy in a challenging institution is difficult to build and implement.

The most important areas are within their field of expertise, but there is also a growing interest in digitization and scanning.

**Availability of Resources** – This question reveals employees' perceptions of the resources available to them to achieve their professional objectives. The aspects considered are the factors that most influence professional and organizational performance, as well as job satisfaction of public servants.

The resources related to their activities are perceived as ranging from sufficient to insufficient, but the perception is dispersed and largely depends on the specific workplace. The item is relevant as it shows the respondents' increased interest in their own activities and the necessary conditions.

Support in managing one's career can form the basis of a trust relationship between employee and employer, as both parties are then invested in expending resources and energy on career development throughout the professional life, with beneficial effects for the organization. The most important aspect is that an employee also has a strong positive intrinsic motivation.

#### **Impact of New ICT Technologies**

Digitalization, as a continuous challenge for their career, is seen by most respondents not as something overwhelming but rather as a positive stimulus that provides a reasonable target to achieve, requiring the mobilization of necessary resources within a mutually advantageous development space.

The results obtained are constructive and confirm the study's hypothesis regarding the need and interest of employees in career management as a constant concern in public administration. We hope that their needs will be met through the further development of this human resources component, indicating that employees perceive their own responsibilities in developing their careers.

Our approach at this stage is to capture these aspects for initiating an institutional development and career management process. The intention is to gain the support of the entire society for developing human resources in public administration, including civil society, the media, and citizens, considering that a deeper understanding of the phenomenon can contribute to an adequate response to the needs of a category of personnel that provides services less known to the general public. Cooperation and mutual support are the foundation for a robust career construction for these officials, ensuring that the objectives set at the union level for customs administration are met.

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### **3.4 Customs Officials with a European Mission**

The career development of customs personnel becomes a priority in the context of global challenges, with customs being one of the most important actors of the European Union. Besides the crises of recent years – Brexit, the pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine – which the European Union had to respond to, with customs authorities of member states being at the forefront of quick reactions, this union of sovereign states must also adapt and prove its efficiency in a strongly impacted economic environment focused on digitization and e-commerce.

Human resources management means aligning an organization's human capital (its people) with the activity plan, so the organization can fulfill its mission. It is the first step – the foundation of the recruitment process. Moreover, it is the first link to the competency framework – ensuring that organizations identify the necessary profiles (in terms of general and specific competencies). Successful workforce planning typically involves changes to the current workforce (mobility, succession, training, etc.) and, if necessary, recruiting individuals who meet institutional needs. Strategic workforce planning usually has long-term applicability and focuses on identifying critical positions and strategic competencies needed to achieve future objectives. Operational workforce planning is typically short-term (annual or shorter) and focuses on immediate staffing and competency needs.

Promoting and approving changes to the status of customs personnel according to the complexity and responsibility of customs personnel as the primary guardian of the Customs Union and the Single Market (including eliminating discrimination between the rights of customs personnel and the rights of other personnel benefiting from special statuses) becomes a goal to ensure that this category of personnel benefits from, in addition to their significant responsibilities, the specific tools of their function.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS**

Customs personnel play a crucial role in protecting Romania and the European Union's external border, spanning 2,070 kilometers, the second-longest external border in the EU, with 1,877 kilometers being land borders. In the past, the primary responsibility of customs personnel was the collection of customs duties and indirect taxes on imports. The transfer of criminal prosecution powers to a specialized division within the National Customs Authority aimed to streamline the recording and investigation of customs offenses.

However, changes such as the expansion and globalization of trade, the development of e-commerce, and the rise of terrorist threats and organized crime have significantly altered the context in which customs operate. Currently, customs inspectors carry out a wide range of supervision and control

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responsibilities concerning goods imported into the EU customs territory. They not only collect customs duties, VAT, and excise taxes, where applicable, but also inspect the goods for various non-fiscal purposes to ensure compliance with EU requirements on product conformity, food, health, and environmental standards, among others.

The implementation of the Common European Framework with Customs Competencies through the establishment of a Customs School will enhance the knowledge of customs personnel, providing appropriate initial and continuous training according to the existing Union framework. This will adapt the human capital to the institution's needs and improve human resource management. The results provide insights into areas for improvement in teaching methods and allow the public sector to be more competitive by delivering well-prepared graduates through a quality-focused teaching-learning process.

Promoting and adopting changes to the status of customs personnel is essential, given the complexity and responsibility they hold as the primary guardians of the Customs Union and the Single Market. These changes should eliminate any discrimination between the rights of customs personnel and those of other special-status categories, ensuring that customs personnel have the appropriate powers and resources to fulfill their responsibilities effectively.

Today, Customs Authorities across Europe face a rapidly changing environment: evolving production and consumption patterns, increased international trade exchanges, global threats such as terrorism, organized crime, climate change, and new dangers like the trade in hazardous products. To meet such complex objectives in a challenging environment, a systemic approach is needed to support customs personnel and human resources structures, developing compatibility between customs personnel careers and institutional evolution in the Union context, ensuring that the development process is mutually beneficial.

Based on the survey conducted and the data processed, several personal conclusions were drawn. The survey results indicate that the AVR staff is aging, with a very small percentage of young employees (only 0.6% are between 18 and 25 years old). This indicates a significant issue that could affect the institution's activity in the near future. A significant portion of the staff is approaching retirement age, potentially leading to an acute shortage of qualified personnel if many employees retire simultaneously, creating major difficulties in the optimal functioning of the unit.

In an extremely competitive labor market, attracting new qualified employees is increasingly difficult. To address this challenge, we propose establishing a school dedicated to training future employees and improving the current staff. This institution would provide continuous training and development courses, periodic evaluation, and updating of necessary skills. Through this initiative, we ensure that personnel are well-prepared to face technological changes and maintain a

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high level of efficiency. Thus, implementing a succession and rejuvenation plan becomes crucial to prevent potential issues related to the optimal operation of our institution.

The rapid advancement of technology and IT requires continuous updating of employee skills. New technologies offer opportunities but also significant challenges. Preparing personnel to handle these transformations is crucial for maintaining the unit's competitiveness and efficiency.

It is necessary to develop a strategic plan that includes:

- Preventive measures to manage the risk of mass retirement.
- Initiatives to attract and retain young employees.
- Continuous training programs to update staff skills, especially in the technological and IT fields.

By implementing these measures, the unit can ensure a smooth transition and continuity of activities, while maintaining long-term competitiveness.

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