

# The Hungarian Practice for Teaching National Security Studies at the University of Public Service

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In general, it can be stated that the national security services play a special role in the state administration, the importance of which is becoming more and more appreciated these days. Their tasks are manifested in supporting the security and providing relevant information to decision-makers at the political level. This requires qualified staff, in which higher education plays an important role. In Hungary, the national security higher education is among the official training offer at the National University of Public Service, whose civil national security field appears among the Faculty of Law Enforcement courses. The training structure, the competences to be acquired, the security policy and the analysis approach are in line with similar examples on the international scene. Along the lines of the above ideas, the study describes the Hungarian practice at NUPS, and formulates ideas for higher education in national security.

**Keywords:** national security, higher education, security

## I. Introduction

Nowadays, the effective working of national security services requires highly qualified professionals. Generally stated, universities all over the world provide an important higher education background to meet this need, with a very diverse range of courses on offer. A significant proportion of their staff are graduates from higher education, and many different skills may be required in the security services system. One can think of engineers, computer scientists, lawyers, or financial specialists. Concerning the workforce, as an additional option, university degrees closer to their security role and professionalism are also becoming important. This could also help them to develop and broaden their knowledge in the scientific fields relevant to the sector.

Because of the complex sectoral structure, this paper deals with the place and role of the Institute of National Security and its role as a science organizer in the field. It will discuss the purpose of the so-called civilian national security training courses offered by the Faculty of Law Enforcement<sup>2</sup>, with particular reference to the specificities of the leadership courses. It is worth pointing out that there are many similar higher education courses in the international arena, designed to meet the needs of the security sector. In the Western training context, all these can be found in the training categories of national security studies or even intelligence studies. The paper will discuss the role of competences and knowledge, their development in higher education and the importance of the academic activities behind these courses.

Nowadays, in the complex security policy environment, the knowledge also comes from several disciplines, so that in addition to the traditionally dominant military science, police science, as well as law and history, also play an important role. In this context, the aim is to provide a higher education framework adapted to the training needs of the public administration - defence - law enforcement sector, where a wide range of disciplines and knowledge is represented.

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<sup>2</sup> Gábor, Kovács: *A Rendészettudományi Kar további fejlesztésének főbb irányai*. *Belügyi Szemle* 2022, 70(10), 2047-2060. <https://doi.org/10.38146/BSZ.2022.10.7>

## II. The training framework

The need for higher education training in the security sector is present in many European countries. On the one hand, universities provide the general environment for the transfer of knowledge, and on the other hand, historically, they have been one of the key centres for the concentration of new knowledge and skills. Accordingly, this environment should be seen not only as an educational environment, but also as a place for academic relations and development. It will allow for the enlargement of the literature on national security/intelligence studies, the publication of new theories and even methodologies. This is the place where a community of historians and researchers can present and discuss the history of the profession and learn from international experience. The role of international literature and research databases, which the university environment offers a wide range of opportunities for accessing, can be highlighted.

In Hungary, the framework for higher education in national security at university level can be found in the training offered by the National University of Public Service. Due to its history, the field of training is close to both military and law enforcement thinking, so its training areas have a place in both fields. Looking back at the history of the secret services in the 20th century, the two fields had their own training history, which was abolished with the change of regime. It was only about a decade later that the process of developing training for the national security services in higher education started to be developed and launched again. „Military higher education played a decisive role in this, as national security training was already a constant feature at the Miklós Zrínyi National Defence University.”<sup>3</sup> In the years that followed, the university created bachelor's and master's degrees in national security with a military orientation, in line with the "Bologna system". The civilian-oriented national security courses could already be offered after the creation of the University of Public Service.<sup>4</sup>

Currently two faculties at the University of Public Service offer national security courses. The Faculty of Law Enforcement and the Faculty of Military Science and Officer Training. These trainings are coordinated, among other things, by the Institute of National Security, a specific organisational element of the University.

This Institute and the three coordinated departments are responsible for higher education in national security. The Institute's role is stated on the university website

*"The Institute of National Security (INS) is an interdisciplinary institute responsible for higher education and training on national security at the Ludovika - University of Public Service. The main tasks of the Institute are to organize the national security higher education programs with the cooperation of three university departments (Military National Security Department, Civilian National Security Department, and the Counterterrorism Department) and to coordinate the teaching of subjects related to national security. The INS conducts scientific research to develop the educational background, literatures and cooperates with the relevant organizations as well as professional and scientific research institutes."*<sup>5</sup>

In terms of training offerings, both military and civilian national security have bachelor's and master's degrees, which can be seen in the training offerings of the faculties. The Training and

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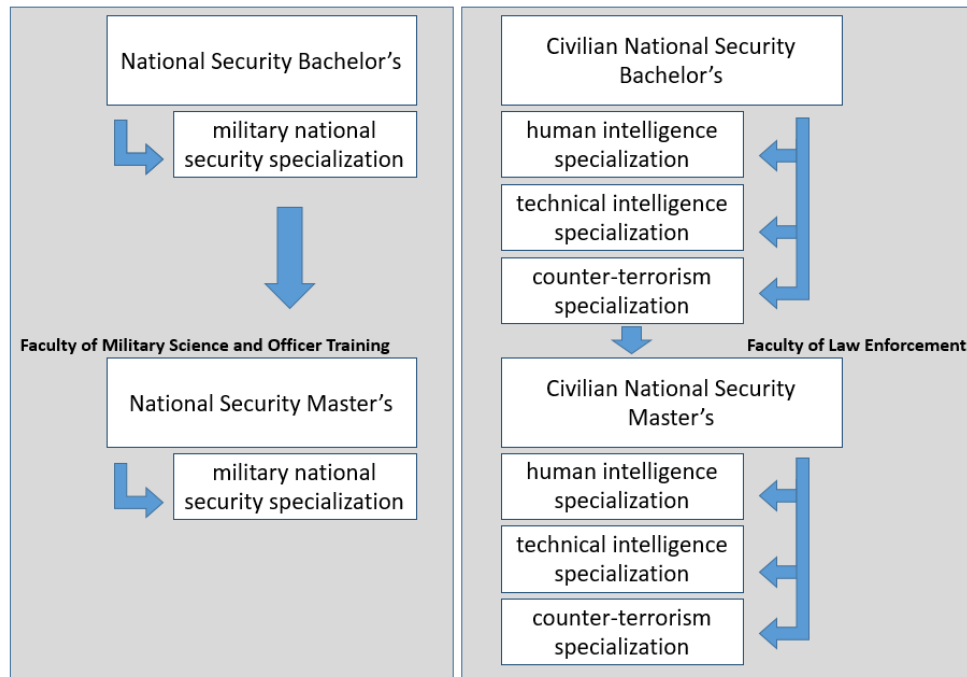
<sup>3</sup> István, Héjja: *A katonai nemzetbiztonsági képzések helyzete (1990-2012)*, Nemzetbiztonsági Szemle. Képzéstörténeti Konferencia, Különszám, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Imre, Dobák: *Polgári nemzetbiztonsági képzések a hazai felsőoktatásban: A képzésfejlesztés aktuális kérdései*, Nemzetbiztonsági Szemle (Online) 2017, 37-54. (2017)

<sup>5</sup> <https://nbi.uni-nke.hu/english/introduction> (downloaded: 08.28.2022)

Output Requirements can be seen at the 222/2019. (IX. 25.) Government Decree. The Hungarian higher education in national security has several specificities similar to other European countries. (These university programs on national security, are open only for the members of Hungarian authorized organizations, who meets other prescribed requirements also.)

Figure 1: Training structure for national security studies at UPS (Hungary)<sup>6</sup>



### III. Knowledge, competence

As far as the training objectives are concerned, it can be generally formulated that the aim of the Bachelor Degree Programme is to train experts with a high level of professional knowledge, who are familiar with new scientific developments in the field and have theoretical and practical knowledge that goes beyond professional issues (e.g. legal, psychological, information technology, security policy). In the Masters courses, all these training objectives move away from practical training elements towards more comprehensive theoretical issues. In addition to the expert training areas, the ability to develop the theory and methodology of the profession is emphasised, as well as the development of leadership skills. For details of the training objectives, see Government Decree No. 222/2019 (IX.25.) on the register of qualifications in the field of science of public governance and the training and graduation requirements of the programme.

It is understood that the courses include legal, political science, political science, history, security policy and professional subjects. This is not a Hungarian specificity, as these areas (diplomacy, strategic intelligence, analytical evaluation) are also included in the elements of national security and intelligence studies courses that are visible on the international scene.

The development of leadership competencies is also important and is emphasised in the Hungarian training structure, especially in the Master's degree. This is reflected, for example, in the title of

<sup>6</sup> Source: Compiled by the author.

the qualification promised by the civilian national security degree (certified senior national security expert), which appears among the law enforcement area. The name reflects the dual nature of the internal content of the degree, i.e. the combination of professional expertise and management skills.<sup>7</sup>

In the field of national security, the question often arises as to where its professionals can obtain the knowledge specific to the sector. International literature shows that this comes from several directions:

- the wide range of professional knowledge that is available in civilian life is necessary to carry out tasks specific to the sector. This is the case, for example, for HUMINT activities, where specific fields of knowledge, ranging from pedagogy to sociology and psychology, are also present. But we can also think of IT and other technical skills, which are indispensable in the security sector of the 21st century. These do not, however, fully represent the specialised knowledge that is important for the sector, but they do appear in a number of elements.
- this includes specific forms of transfer of knowledge within the sector, where generic knowledge can be passed on to the next generation.
- the national primacy of national security at national level means that national security policy documents (strategies) and the legislative environment in which the intelligence sector operates are an important element.

The above indicate that the university environment provides an opportunity to develop an alignment between the profession and the knowledge taught by academics. This ensures that in many fields, such as law, history and security policy, a respected community of academics and researchers can share their knowledge with students.

#### **IV. The training methods**

In terms of the structure of training, both theoretical and practical subjects are taught in the Bachelor's degree (BA), while in the Master's degree (MA), are more prominent the theoretical subjects. As regards the training objectives, it can be generally stated that the bachelor's degree aims to train professionals with a high level of professional knowledge, who are familiar with the latest scientific results in the field and have theoretical and practical knowledge, while in the master's degree all these training objectives are shifting away from the practical training elements towards more comprehensive theoretical issues. In addition to expert knowledge, particular focus is given to the ability to develop the theory and methodology of the profession, and to the development of leadership skills. This, together with the duality of the internal content of the degree, is reflected in the title of the diploma, which combines expert and managerial skills ("Senior Expert in Civil National Security").

The structures of the subjects consist of core subjects, specialisation subjects and electives. The core subjects cover the main knowledge specific to the field of national security, complemented by specialisation subjects.<sup>8</sup> Regarding training-teaching methods: In addition to theoretical training, part-time courses have a smaller share of practical training. At the same time, creative training methods play an important role, and in addition to classroom-based individual and group work placements, there are field trips. See table 1.

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<sup>7</sup> Imre, Dobák: *A nemzetbiztonsági felsőoktatás aktuális kérdései*, Hadtudományi Szemle, 11,1 pp. 157-172. , (2018)

<sup>8</sup> József Boda: *A nemzetbiztonsági képzés helyzete Magyarországon*, Belügyi Szemle 66 : 2 pp. 5-21. (2018)

Table 1: Core subjects at the Bachelor's and Master's programme<sup>9</sup>

In the subject structure of the Bachelor's programme, they appear, among others, in the core subjects:	In the subject structure of the Master's programme, they appear, among others, in the core subjects:
Special knowledge of security and defence Law knowledge Military technology Analysis and evaluation of information Criminalistics, Criminology National security studies International institutions Law enforcement pedagogy Law Struggle against terrorism History of the secret services	Hungarian foreign and security policy International security institutions General theory of national security Law Diplomacy studies Studies in counter-intelligence Intelligence studies Introduction to Scientific Research Evaluation-analysis-information in national security Challenges, risks, threats in the 21st century National security and ethics

### **A The place and role of management skills**

Subjects directly related to the teaching of leadership skills:

- Theory of leadership and management theory, leadership of law enforcement activities 1-2
- Theory of leadership and management theory, leadership of national security activities

The internal content of these subjects will introduce students to management theory, organisational models and organisational theory issues. The subjects will cover the management process, decision-making, organisational coordination, strategic planning and management, project management and their sectoral specificities.

The course structure includes additional subjects such as, the theory and practice of leadership psychology, human resources management and development, communication, leadership skills, management communication, management competencies, development of leadership skills. Highly qualified professionals<sup>10</sup> teach all these from the relevant departments of the University.

### **B The discipline**

In Hungary, the growth of professional literature related to the field of national security has accelerated mainly in the last two decades, which has also indicated the expansion of the number of researchers, academics and professionals working in this field. Traditionally, historians and researchers have been present, researching the past of the secret services. There is also a growing number of researchers and studies dealing with national security theory, issues of analysis and evaluation, and the security challenges of the 21st century.

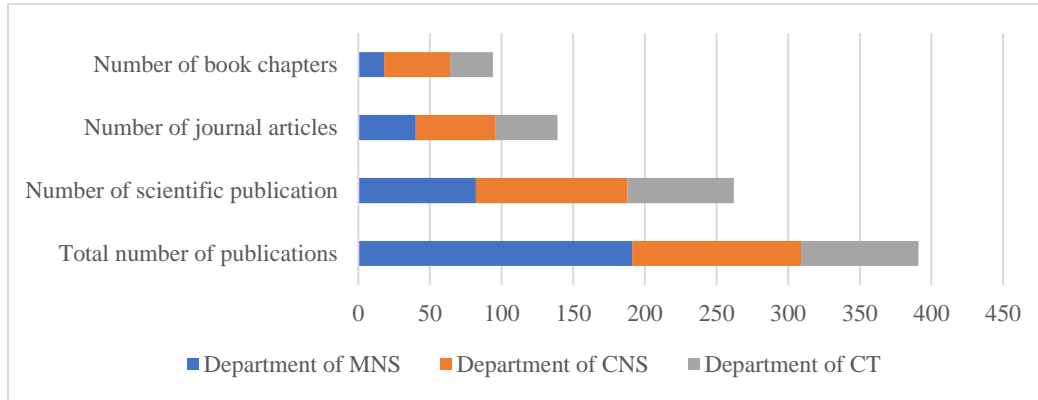
Concerning the members of the INS, we have reviewed the expansion of the range of scientific literature appearing in scientific database (MMTM - Hungarian Scientific Bibliography). For the field of training coordinated by the Institute, the number of publications (2012-2022) registered in the MMTM (Hungarian Thesaurus of Scientific Works) shows the participation of the academics linked to the field in scientific publications and thus their scientific activity. However, the composition of the literature defines the aims to the future, which is the strengthening of publication

<sup>9</sup> Source: Document of the training. Compiled by the author.

<sup>10</sup> Gábor, Kovács: *Expectations of the Lecturers of the University of Public Service Faculty of Law Enforcement*, In: Nenad Koropanovski. Archibald Reiss Days 2011. ISBN: 9788670204706, 9788670201903, pp. 253-259.

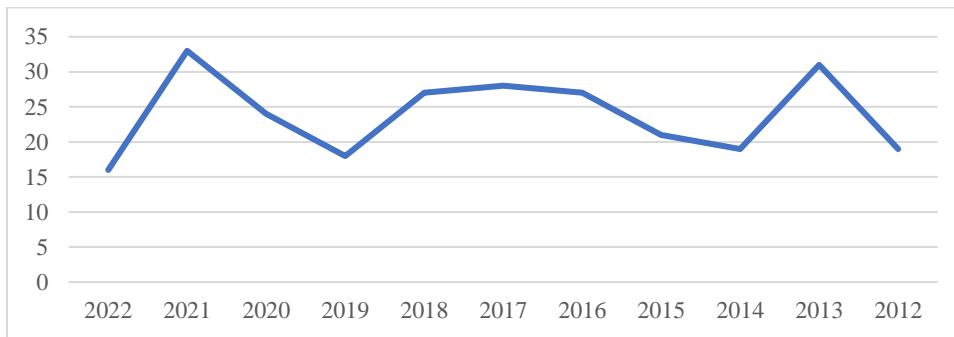
activity in the international scientific environment, where the dominance of English language is evident.

Figure 2: Number of publications registered at the INS, in the Hungarian Scientific Bibliography (MTMT) database (2012-2022)<sup>11</sup>



The graph below shows the 263 scientific journal articles published by year in the INS aggregate.

Figure 3: Number of scientific journal articles published by the UPS National Security Institute community 2012-2022<sup>12</sup>



## V. Closing remarks

Overall, the Hungarian national security higher education direction is well aligned with international patterns in many elements. The academic environment ensures a broad range of knowledge and the continuous development of the discipline.

While the “market” for training can be seen as limited, international examples confirm that there is a place for intelligence/national security training in the university curriculum. With the technological environment and the continuous development of the information society, many areas of knowledge (e.g. open information gathering, analysis and evaluation) are also valuable for external economic and business actors. It is becoming increasingly important to understand the complex relationships and contexts of our times and, indirectly, to develop the literatures,

<sup>11</sup> Source: Hungarian Scientific Bibliography (MTMT) database [www.mtmt.hu](http://www.mtmt.hu)

<sup>12</sup> Source: Hungarian Scientific Bibliography (MTMT) database [www.mtmt.hu](http://www.mtmt.hu)

particularly in areas that contribute to understanding, interpreting and addressing the challenges of our times.

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