

# ROMANIAN DEFENCE 2024

## INSIDE

The Romanian Armed Forces' goals in 2024

Romania's participation in missions and operations outside the national territory

Major Procurement Programs – Top Priority of the Romanian Ministry of National Defence



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# Ensuring national security and contributing to the **ALLIED DETERRENCE AND DEFENCE POSTURE**

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In the near future, and especially in 2024, beside ensuring national security and performing the assigned missions in accordance with the Main Law, the National Security Strategy and the Defence White Paper, the Romanian Armed Forces will significantly contribute to the deterrence and defence posture in the Allied context. Short term priorities of the Romanian Armed Force are determined by the current security context marked by the Russian illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

Enshrined in Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty, building national resilience against a full spectrum of hazards and threats is the foundation of a credible deterrence and defence posture and is, therefore, vital for safeguarding our values, society, security and national independence.

In this respect, our efforts will focus on creating a high-readiness, deployable, self-sustainable structure force that relies on modern equipment, with multi-dimensional force protection capabilities and with a flexible and efficient command and control system.

We will continue to develop an active profile at NATO and EU levels, by participating in the decision-making process, in the defence capability development initiatives and processes, in multinational cooperation frameworks, as well as in NATO and EU-led missions and operations.

One of the priorities is the implementation of the decisions made at the NATO Summits in Madrid and Vilnius with a focus on the new military planning construct (Deterrence and Defence of Euro-Atlantic Area Plans), long-term adaptation of NATO deterrence and defence posture and consolidation of allied presence in the Black Sea region. A particular attention will be paid to ensuring the full readiness of the Collective Defence Battle Group in Romania, including at brigade level, as well as to the modernization and consolidation of NATO command and force structure.

In order to achieve this desired end-state, the implementation of the NATO New Force Model concept, in accordance with the Force Structure Requirements and all other NATO and EU initiatives, is a 'must'. We will concentrate all our efforts on accomplishing all our assigned missions,



General  
Gheorghiță VLAD  
Chief of Defence Staff

through developing and synchronising our functional and critical capabilities in order to attain operational superiority, as well as by contributing and supporting NATO's deterrence and defence posture on the Eastern flank of the Alliance.

2024 will be a year of major changes for the NATO Force Structure, a year with the most significant challenges throughout the entire Alliance history. The conflict in Ukraine and the global volatile security environment determine NATO and Romania to subsequently adapt their posture and to respond with an appropriate and tailored approach to defend the Alliance's interests.

Romania, as NATO Ally on its Eastern flank, holds the right proactiveness in support of the allied major efforts to deter all the threats, particularly the ones directed from the Eastern bounds. As outlined in the NATO Vilnius Summit Communiqué, Russia has increased its hybrid actions against the NATO Allies and partners. There is a need to synchronise the effects produced in different fields (air, land, sea, cyber, space, and intelligence) and to enhance all the tools at our disposal in order to counter the hybrid actions conducted by the opponent.

The geo-political security context urges us to finalize the Major Procurement Programmes in order to benefit from all the functional capabilities, and also compels us to continue the modernisation process of the Romanian Armed Forces, in order to ensure and develop our actional superiority, by bridging gaps and preparing for the future.

In order to coherently sustain all the projects, last year we reviewed the Romanian Armed Forces' Transformation Plan until 2040. According to the Defence Investment Pledge agreed upon at the Wales Summit in 2014, we are striving to fully benefit from the increased defence budget (2,5% of GDP) and we are able to reprioritize and accelerate the procurement programs, to appropriately consolidate the operational capability of national forces, to speed up the capability development plans, by prioritizing those initiated and developed within the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), also greatly

considering new national projects with the aim of moving toward the drone age warfare.

We are committed to meeting the long-standing major equipment requirements and NATO Capability Targets, in order to rectify existing shortfalls and meet the requirements across all domains arising from a more contested security environment.

This modernization process includes also aligning the defence capstone doctrine to the latest security developments, availability of resources and technological advancements, providing the armed forces with a guidance framework for the conduct of operations based on enduring lessons learned. A reassessment of the doctrine development methodology is necessary in order to implement a new hierarchical, more organized and logical doctrine development system which best supports the conduct of multi-domain and joint operations.

Another major and important role in this entire process is held by the quality of the human resources within the Romanian Armed Forces. The promotion of the military profession and career, the recruitment, the selection and training of our military personnel is essential in increasing the entire force structure manning level. All these are a prerequisite for a combat-ready and robust force committed to act in support of achieving national and allied objectives.

Collective training and exercises are fundamental elements through which training, development and combat readiness of the military entities is achieved in order to accomplish the mission and build human, conceptual, procedural and technological interoperability, in a national and allied environment.

All these measures have to be directed towards deterrence and consolidated defence of the national territory in an allied framework in order to provide an adequate, rapid, decisive and concerted reaction not only to a hostile Eastern flank threat, but also to all specific hybrid threats.

In response to the threats we may face, we remain vigilant, ensuring a substantial, credible and persistent presence of our military forces, together with our Allies, on land, air and at sea, complemented by our cyber capabilities.

# A safe and secure European Union.

## ROMANIA IN EUROPEAN SECURITY CONTEXT

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**T**he international security environment has dramatically changed. The European Union is now surrounded by conflicts and instability. Russia's invasion of Ukraine represents a brutal war at EU's doorstep, a tectonic shift in European history. In Africa, *coup d'états* are in trend and they are increasing the risk of instability expansion, as the terrorist attacks are rising, posing a serious threat to peace and security. Security and stability throughout the Western Balkans are still not a given. Vulnerable partners in the Eastern Neighborhood, such as Republic of Moldova, need support, as they are dealing with the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as with Russia's destabilization attempts.

On top of these regional conflicts and tensions, the global security is also impacted by transnational threats and complex dynamics that have direct implications on the European Union security. Different actors are using hybrid tactics, cyberattacks, disinformation, interferences and information manipulation and so on. One sided dependencies are also creating vulnerabilities for the EU and its member states. And besides all of these, climate change affects us in a complex way, creating new dilemmas for the security and defence as well.

The security environment is more and more complex and responding to it requires a broader approach to security. EU has certain advantages in this new global landscape, by having both the means and the capacity to deal with the threats from various directions. It can use diplomacy, civilian and military crisis management tools, financial assistance, sanctions, and not least, its regulatory power. As we will point out in this article, EU has also an increasingly important role in the security and defence side.

“Today we have both old and new conflicts; both visible and invisible wars. As EU, we need to see the whole board, connect the dots and act as one”.

— JOSEP BORRELL, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission



Defence Minister's participation in the Informal Meeting of the EU Ministers of Defence, at Brussels

## TOWARDS MORE EUROPEAN STRATEGIC RESPONSIBILITY

The return of war in Europe is considered to be a wake-up call for the EU. The Strategic Compass recognizes that a stronger and more capable EU in the field of security and defence will contribute positively to global and transatlantic security and is complementary to NATO, which remains the foundation of collective defence for its members.

In the current complex security landscape, EU and its Member States acknowledged that EU must do more for its own security, in a complementary and interoperable manner with NATO. This means becoming a more responsible actor, while advancing European strategic responsibility implies building the capabilities needed, in order to share more of the burden, as well as increasing the ability to respond to crisis in EU's neighborhood.

## EU'S RESPONSE TO RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

In response to Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, EU and EU Member States mobilized all tools at their disposal. Beside the heavy sanctions imposed and the humanitarian assistance provided to Ukraine, EU took unprecedented decisions in the field of security and defence. For the first time, EU decided to use the European Peace Facility (EPF) to enable the delivery of military assistance to Ukraine, including lethal weapons. So far, EU mobilized 5.6 billion euro under EPF to incentivize Member States to support Ukraine. In another historical step, EU launched its first ever Common Security Defence Policy mission on EU soil (EUMAM Ukraine), with an initial ambition of training 1,000 Ukrainian soldiers, the new target now

being 40,000, as 25,000 Ukrainian soldiers have already been trained. In addition to this, EU has also taken major steps forward in the defence sector, by launching two new financial instruments: ASAP (Act in Support of Ammunition Production) and EDIRPA (European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act). We do believe these instruments will contribute to the increase of the EU production capacity and will incentivize member states to jointly procure the most critical and urgent defence products.

The return of large-scale war in Europe also saw the transatlantic relations revigorated, with EU and NATO cooperating more closely and the United States reaffirming their commitment to European security.

## STRATEGIC COMPASS AND EU'S WIDER REACH

The security context in Europe at the moment also gave new impetus to the overall security and defence agenda. In March 2022, shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine, EU Member States adopted the *“Strategic Compass for Security and Defence – For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security”*. This document is a Member States' owned document.

The Strategic Compass sets out guidelines for EU's action in the security and defence field up to 2030. It lays out concrete actions and timelines, grouped within four chapters: Act, Secure, Invest and Partners. There has already been significant progress in its implementation. EU adapted its missions and operations model, strengthened its ability to address threats and secure access to strategic domains such as cyber, space and maritime. Moreover, Member States have decided to increase their defence spending and investment. In order to ensure Member States to spend better and effectively, the Strategic Compass proposed that Member States invest in collaborative capability development, mitigate strategic dependencies, reduce shortfalls and invest in innovations, as well as in emerging and disruptive technologies. EU also strengthened its partnerships around the world, not least with NATO and the United States.

While supporting Ukraine is a top priority at EU level, the European Union also continued to support partners in other parts of the world. Besides EUMAM Ukraine,

there are 8 ongoing military missions and operations covering Africa, as well as the Western Balkans. EPF funding was also used, in line with its global scope, to assist different partners, including the Republic of Moldova.

Prior to the outbreak of Russia's war of aggression and even before the Strategic Compass, at EU level, we already had in place initiatives such as Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and European Defence Fund (EDF), designed to promote capability development and technological and industrial innovation.

The European Defence Fund is the most impacting EU defence initiative, being seen as a game changer in taking forward the collaborative defence research and capability development at European level. On its part, PESCO is a critical instrument in times of increasing security challenges. It provides a platform for collaboration and delivering concrete results, with 68 PESCO projects aimed at developing new capabilities, providing training and support to military forces. These initiatives led to an increased role of EU in security and defence.

The return of war in Europe brought back attention to the importance of military mobility. Being able to move troops and equipment quickly is a prerequisite.

## ROMANIA IN THE EUROPEAN SECURITY CONTEXT

Romania has been positioning itself as a promoter of a stronger European Defence, developed within the transatlantic agenda. Responsibility, complementarity and interoperability are not just buzz words, but key elements of our approach towards European security and defence. Only a well-coordinated and close cooperation between EU and NATO and between EU and US can properly ensure the security of our continent and efficiently manage the various challenges we face and prepare for the future.

Romania is also an important contributor within CSDP operational dimension. The Romanian Armed Forces are contributing to all **CSDP military missions and operations**. As Western Balkans region is a priority at national level, our biggest contribution is to **EUFOR Althea**, operation which has a key role in maintaining a safe and stable environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina. More than 230 troops are deployed to the theatre, under



EUFOR Althea, while hundreds more are on standby, being part of the reserve system of the operation. In May 2023, Romania took over the EUFOR Chief of Staff position, for one year. The position is currently held by Brigadier General Ovidiu Lungu. Romania is an active contributor to **EUNAVFOR MED Irini**, EU's maritime operation in the Mediterranean. In 2023, King Ferdinand Frigate participated in this operation for a month. Moreover, Romania is also contributing to the military training missions conducted in Central African Republic, Mali, Mozambique, Somalia, Niger and to the other EU naval operation, EUNAVFOR Atalanta. Not least, Romania is contributing to the training efforts undertaken in support of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, under **EUMAM Ukraine**.

Romania recognized the importance of **spending more and better**, along with addressing together the existing gaps through collaborative defence investments, including for research and development, in order to improve common resilience. Significant progress has been made in implementing the main EU defence initiatives: **Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)**, **European Defence Fund (EDF)**, **Coordinated Annual Review of Defence (CARD)** or **Military Mobility**, which are good indicators of the political will to advance European defence. Furthermore, over the last years Romania performed complex actions aimed

at promoting a collaborative culture at national level in order to take full benefit from the EU collaborative programmes and projects and make the best use of **CARD recommendations**.

Romania's contribution to PESCO is firmly appreciated at EU level given our commitment to making real progress in the joint development of defence capabilities. In terms of figures, as of 2023, Romania is involved in 23 PESCO projects out of 68, as a member or an observer, and also coordinates two of them: *CBRN Defence Training Range (CBRND TR)* and *European Union Network of Diving Centres (EUNDC)*.

Over the last years, the Ministry of National Defence updated the national legislation and organized periodic meetings with representatives of the national defence industry, research institutes and universities in order to promote the benefits of participation in collaborative projects, in particular within PESCO and EDF.

For ensuring military mobility, Romania is involved in the implementation of *Rail-2-Sea* project within the *Three Seas Initiatives* as well as in the *Via Carpathia* project of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T).

Romania combines today a relevant economic growth, a certain energy independency, a predictable and reliable national defence construct to consolidate



its posture as a regional actor and security provider in Eastern Europe. Thus, our country is supporting the need to develop the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base in a geographically balanced manner, aiming at integrating small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from all across Europe into the new defence industrial architecture.

More than ever, it is critical to enhance the cooperation and coordination at EU level to better address national urgent needs and create additional production lines in Eastern Europe. The new initiatives at EU level create new opportunities for Romania, including for the revitalization of the Romanian defence industry.



Rotation ceremony of ALTHEA Maneuver Platoon in the theatre of operations from Bosnia and Herzegovina

***The role of the EU in the security and defence is gaining more relevance. EU can bring added value to a peaceful environment by acting at different dimensions. What we should always have in mind is the importance of complementarity and interoperability with NATO. EU and NATO have mutually reinforcing roles that contribute to the strengthening of security in Europe and beyond.***

***Romania remains keen on continuing the efforts of developing and maintaining robust, resilient and credible, interoperable, flexible and efficient defence capabilities, designated to meet both the EU and NATO commitments, as well as to deter a potential aggression. Our Armed Forces will also continue to participate in CSDP missions and operations, contributing to security and stability in our wider neighborhood.***

# ROMANIA'S CONTRIBUTION to the SEDM Process

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In response to the ever-evolving international security landscape, a concerted effort is underway to adapt existing cooperative initiatives and create new mechanisms to address emerging threats and foster enhanced regional cooperation. Born out of discussions dating back to 1996, the South-Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial (SEDM) Process has emerged as a driver of politico-military cooperation among the defence ministries of Southeast European nations and beyond.

SEDM's primary mission is to bolster stability and collaboration within the region. It was founded on the principles of dialogue and cooperation, giving rise to a series of impactful projects, such as the South-Eastern Europe Simulation Network (SEESIM), the interconnection of Military Hospitals (IMIHO) among SEDM member states, the Building Integrity (BI) program and the Female Leaders in Security and Defence (FLSD) initiative.

To effectively coordinate the multitude of projects and activities within SEDM, the member states have collectively established two pivotal bodies: the Coordination Committee (SEDM-CC) and the Politico-Military Steering Committee (PMSC). The latter oversees the Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe (MPFSEE), which plays a crucial role in regional security efforts.

One of the tangible outcomes of this initiative is the South-Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG), under the Agreement on MPFSEE, underscoring the practical and operational dimension of SEDM's objectives.

SEDM represents a significant milestone in fostering unity and collaboration among Southeast European nations in the field of defence and security.

Romania has consistently demonstrated its commitment to fostering regional security and cooperation within the SEDM process. Over the years, Romania's active involvement in SEDM has had a

significant impact on shaping the dialogue and initiatives aimed at enhancing security in the region.

Romania has played a constructive role within the SEDM framework, notably holding the chairmanship of SEDM-CC/PMSC during two key periods, from 2001 to 2003 and again from 2013 to 2015. During these chairmanships, Romania worked diligently to promote cooperation and collaboration among member states.

Furthermore, Romania's commitment to regional security was exemplified by its hosting of the SEEBRIG Headquarters between 2003 and 2007. Additionally, Romania's leadership extended to the role of SEEBRIG Commander from 2007 to 2009 and again from 2017 to 2020, further consolidating its dedication to peace and stability in the region.

As of July 1, 2023, Romania has officially taken over the Presidency of SEDM-CC/PMSC once more. During this term, Romania has set two primary objectives. Firstly, it will continue to increase the profile and regional significance of SEDM as a vital contributor to security. Secondly, it will devote substantial efforts to reinvigorating SEEBRIG, by emphasizing the importance of a strong regional peacekeeping force. The handover ceremony for the SEDM-CC/PMSC Chairmanship coincided with the change of command for SEEBRIG, both events being organized in Kumanovo, the Republic of North Macedonia.

## UNIQUE VISUAL IDENTITY: THE SYMBOLISM BEHIND ROMANIA'S SEDM CHAIRMANSHIP LOGO

In a tradition upheld by the South-Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial Coordination Committee and Political-Military Steering Committee (SEDM-CC/PMSC), each country assuming the chairmanship has the privilege of selecting a logo that encapsulates its

identity and conveys a specific message. This logo serves as a visual representation of the nation's values and aspirations within the SEDM initiative.

For the current Romanian Chairmanship, the chosen logo is both powerful and symbolic. It prominently features Brancusi's iconic "Column of Infinity," an artistic masterpiece renowned for its simplicity and the impression of boundless continuity it imparts. This timeless sculpture represents the qualities of **Resilience, Commitment, and Stability**, aligning perfectly with the principles that underpin the SEDM initiative.

Combining Brâncuși's "Column of Infinity" with the motto "Resilience, commitment, stability" in a visual logo creates a powerful and symbolic representation. Brâncuși's masterpiece, the "Column of Infinity" (also known as "Endless Column"), is a renowned sculpture known for its simplicity and the sense of endlessness it conveys.

By consequence, "**Resilience, Commitment, Stability**" is the accompanying motto, further emphasizing the core values that Romania aims to promote during its mandate. This motto resonates with the ongoing efforts to ensure peace and security in Southeastern Europe. The selection of Brâncuși's "Column of Infinity" as the centerpiece of the logo not only associates Romania's rich cultural heritage with the chairmanship but also connects it to a broader narrative of endurance and determination. This visual identity serves as a powerful emblem for the Romanian Chairmanship and the collective vision of SEDM member states.

## THE MAIN UPCOMING EVENTS ORGANIZED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE ROMANIAN CHAIRMANSHIP

The South-Eastern Europe Defence (SEDM) Ministers' Meetings serves as a vital decision-making platform within the SEDM initiative, where defence ministers from SEDM member states gather annually to address crucial regional security matters. The next scheduled meeting took place from November 21 to 23, 2023, in Ankara, Türkiye. During these gatherings, consensus-driven decisions are reached, encompassing topics ranging from admitting new members to modifying existing projects, as well as adopting or amending procedural rules and agreements.

A significant focus of this ministerial meeting is the anticipated accession of the Republic of Moldova as a full member, a development of great importance under the Romanian Chairmanship. Another topic of considerable interest and significance that was debated emerged in the latest discussions within the South-East Europe Defence Ministerial Coordination Committee and Political-Military Steering Committee (SEDM-CC/PMSC). **Romania's non-paper proposal**, aimed at reinvigorating the South-Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG), has captured the attention of all the member states. This proposal has been the focal point of intense and productive deliberations, including those held during the most recent SEDM-CC/PMSC meeting in Timisoara. The non-paper presents a comprehensive strategy for revitalizing SEEBRIG, reflecting Romania's commitment to enhancing regional security and cooperation. The non-paper's objectives align with SEDM's broader mission, which seeks to fortify stability and collaboration in Southeastern Europe.

Being at the helm of the SEDM Chairmanship brings not only privileges but also responsibilities. One such responsibility is hosting the regular SEDM-CC and PMSC meetings twice a year. In this context, the fiftieth Meeting of the Politico-Military Steering Committee (PMSC) and the forty-ninth Meeting of the Coordination Committee of the Southeastern Europe Defence Ministerial (SEDM-CC) took place in Timisoara from September 12 to 15, 2023.

The event saw participation from all SEDM member states, observer states, and representatives from prominent international organizations, including NATO, RACVIAC, RCC, and more. Discussions during the meeting revolved around regional cooperation, with a strong emphasis on the practical projects undertaken by SEDM. The Timișoara gathering emphasized Romania's ability to engage effectively in international deliberations on matters of national and regional security. Looking ahead, Romania, as the current SEDM Chairmanship owner, will host the next similar meeting in the spring of the following year, most probable in Iași. These gatherings serve as a testament to the collective commitment of Southeastern European nations to enhancing regional security and fostering cooperation in an ever-evolving global security landscape.



# The ROMANIAN ARMED FORCES' goals in 2024

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**T**oday's security environment is more complex, volatile and unpredictable than it has been over the last three decades. Consequently, the assessment of risks and threats is an unchanging factor of the military institution's activity, as are the permanent adjustments of the defensive capability, meant to give the appropriate response to any possible deterioration of the operational context.

The development of a new **Strategic Defence Analysis (SDA)** is one of the lines of action established for this year. Starting from the assessment of risks and threats, we will develop the concept, inventory the existing capabilities, establish the coordinates based on which we will review the force structure, thus obtaining a calibrated concept of Romania's defence. The results of the SDA will be the constituent elements on the basis of which the defence planning documents for the 2025-2029 cycle will be revised.


**We shall continue strengthening the Romanian Armed Forces' force structure.** The revision of the *2040 Armed Force Program* will set out the priorities for critical capability development, allocation of the equipment that entered the armed forces' service, the distribution of the military educational institutions' graduates, the infrastructure development, and the establishment of stocks by classes of materiel.

**Contributing to the strengthening of the deterrence and defence posture remains a priority.** We are and will continue to be part of NATO's planning processes. We will provide credible, sustainable and high-readiness capabilities within the established timelines and align the national plans with the Regional ones, by ensuring coherence and convergence in time, space and results. We will revise the command & control concept of the force structure and continue rendering operational the

NATO commands on established national territory. The adjustment of the legislative framework necessary to provide for the management of operations in peacetime, in crisis situations or during conflicts is of particular importance in this context. At the same time, we aim to achieve and synchronize our own actions with the progressive implementation of allied response measures in security situations.

Another strategic axis is the **consolidation of the human resources** as the basis of the armed forces' modernization. The revision of the Military Career Guide is necessary in order to have a modern personnel management. Subsequently, it is necessary to adapt a new career development path for Non-Commissioned Officers and Warrant Officers, in order to increase the relevance of this professional body. We are considering rethinking human resources policies in the fields of recruitment, retention, initial training with emphasis on training leaders, respectively the continuous professional development focused on critical and creative thinking, which encourages innovation, initiative and flexibility in decisions and actions. Supporting meritocracy, promoting the military profession profile in the Romanian society and eliminating disparities in treatment among categories of personnel are some of the undertaken desiderata.

We are convinced that the armed force has the capacity and resources necessary to accomplish its fundamental missions, guaranteeing the sovereignty, independence and unity of the state, the country's territorial integrity and constitutional democracy. The Romanian society, our allies and partners, can all count on the dedication, professionalism and responsibility of the Romanian military personnel.



# HQ MND SE – marking 8 years since its establishment

at-major des armées | France

**H**eadquarters Multinational Division South-East (HQ MND-SE) marked its eighth year of existence since its establishment, on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023.

Despite the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine, HQ MND-SE successfully achieved a significant number of established training goals and was able to exercise command and control (C2) over the assigned force elements and added new training requirements for the foreseeable future.

An important milestone was the Combat Readiness Evaluation (CREVAL) marked by LOYAL LEDA 2022 (LOLE22) Exercise at the end of year 2022. The exercise, which represented a major training activity with a high level of effort, was the main method to clearly demonstrate their Full Operational

Capability (FOC) and to validate that the Division is ready and capable of fulfilling its assigned tasks as Warfighting Division (WFD) HQ. NATO HQ MND-SE will be held at High Readiness Force-1 (HRF-1) level as a WFD HQ from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2027.

The field evaluation at Daia Training Center enabled the Division to exercise its Mission Command Systems and Staff Processes within a Training Scenario that practised the HQ MND-SE responsibilities and authorities with both the NATO and Romanian National Command Structures. Through the CREVAL, the Division displayed its reputation as a "learning organization" and consistently sought out areas which needed to be improved. The Division recertification significantly enhanced NATO's ability to deter and defend

.....  
Exercise LOYAL LEDA  
2022

the Eastern flank now and in the future. *“HQ MND-SE is Mission capable”* said Major General Winston P. Brooks, NATO Senior Monitor and the Evaluation Team Chief, in recognition of the competence and dedication of the HQ MND-SE staff.

The establishment of Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East and the declaration of its interim Full Operational Capability had as result the change of the command and control relation of the NATO forces deployed to Romania. Consequently, from January 2023, NATO Force Integration Units from Romania and Bulgaria were placed under the Operational Control (OPCON) of the HQ MNC-SE. In addition, starting from 29 September 2023, the necessity to formally state and use, in all situations, unique identification definitions for the subordinate Battle Groups (BGs) arose. Therefore, from the above mentioned date, the subordinated BGs are identified as:

- ✓ Forward Land Force Battle Group (Italy Framework Nation) – FLF BG (ITA FN) for the TOA'd to NATO Unit, deployed in Bulgaria;
- ✓ Forward Land Force Battle Group (France Framework Nation) – FLF BG (FRA FN) for the TOA'd to NATO Unit, deployed in Romania.

The 2023 training year was busy as the Division needed to conduct a recurrent combat enhancement training/ force integration training process for all rotational force elements within its Area of Responsibility. FLF BG (ITA FN) and FLF BG (FRA FN) conducted significant exercises capable to maintain and increase readiness, improve interoperability with higher HQs, respective Host Nations and Allied partners and contribute to the Alliance deterrent message.

More than that, significant efforts were made by the staff for the successful recertification of Headquarters Multinational Brigade South-East (HQ MNBde-SE) during Exercise DACIAN LANCER 23 (DALA23), and to support Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East (HQ MNC-SE) in reaching its Full Operational Capability (FOC) during Exercise STEADFAST JUPITER 2023 (STJU23).

HQ MND-SE continues to train in order to prepare for the increasingly future unpredictable security environment and to enhance NATO's ability to deter and defend the eastern flank through an effective blend of operations, missions, tasks and activities carried out within and beyond the Alliance territory.



Exercise STEADFAST JUPITER 2023

# Headquarters MULTINATIONAL BRIGADE SOUTH-EAST

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**H**eadquarters Multinational Brigade South-East (HQ MN BDE-SE) is the first multinational structure of this level certified by NATO on its South-Eastern flank, being set up for the implementation of the land component of the tailored Forward Presence (tFP), under the coordination of the Headquarters Multinational Division South-East, in Bucharest. This approach is a defining element in support of the development and consolidation of regional security, to which Romania committed at the Warsaw NATO Summit in 2016.

2<sup>nd</sup> “Rovine” Infantry Brigade was the framework brigade for HQ MN BDE-SE, which declared its Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in April 2017, with at least nine NATO allies interested in joining it. MN BDE-SE was activated, as a NATO Command, on June 27, 2017. On November 15, 2018, the Full Operational Capability (FOC) of the HQ MN BDE-SE was declared following Exercise “SCORPIONS FURY 18”, conducted at the Joint National Training Center, located in Cincu. Around 1,800 troops from eight NATO allied member states (Bulgaria, Canada, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain) took part in the Romanian- led exercise.

SCORPIONS FURY 18, was aimed at assessing the capacity of the HQ MN BDE-SE of accomplishing its assigned mission, by conducting computer-assisted command exercises, field training and live fire exercises.

Starting 2019, the series of Multinational Exercises “SCORPIONS LEGACY” led by HQ MN BDE-SE provided the training framework for the assigned and affiliated units from Bulgaria, Italy and Portugal, as well as for the US troops stationed on Romanian territory. The aim of this joint training was to improve mutual knowledge and trust among participating units, increase their interoperability in a multinational environment and, consequently, enhance NATO’s readiness and deterrence in the South-Eastern area.

Additionally, there are more than five years since the Multinational Brigade South-East maneuver units have been training alongside the Polish Military Contingent deployed to Romania. At an already demanding rate, starting with the first deployment of the Portuguese Contingent to Romania, in September 2021 and a platoon from North Macedonia deployed in December 2022 to Romania, the training has moved to a new level.





Multinational Brigade South-East group photo

In September 2023, the Multinational Brigade South-East participated with over 400 soldiers and technical means of equipment in the Field Evaluation of the Multinational Brigade South-East conducted at the Joint National Training Center in Cincu. *“The exercise represents a very important stage in the activity of the Multinational Brigade South-East; after the exercise, the headquarters of this structure recertified, in accordance with the standards of the alliance, as being able to fulfill the assigned missions. Basically, we are talking about a validation from the land component of the North-Atlantic Alliance, which confirms that this headquarters is able to fulfill its tasks”*, the commander of the Multinational Brigade South-East, Brigadier General Constantin NICOLAESCU stated. The CREVAL (Combat Readiness Evaluation) recertification of the Multinational Brigade South-East Headquarters is a process that began nine

months ago and involved several stages, according to NATO requirements.

At the same time, over the last 5 years, the equipping of the Multinational Brigade South-East maneuver units with new combat vehicles and pieces of equipment which entered the service of the units (8x8 Piranha V armored personnel carriers. Spike Long Range Missiles, etc.) represented other challenge which the brigade troops successfully overcame, while improving their skills and proficiency level.

On another note, it is through exercises and the NATO Standardization processes that NATO units become force multipliers and very effective, and Multinational Brigade South-East makes no exception. Therefore, we can emphatically state that there is one combat-ready unit able to secure and protect the South-Eastern flank of the Alliance.





# MULTINATIONAL CORPS SOUTH-EAST, an Engine of Change in a Challenging Environment

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**T**he Multinational Corps South-East stands for a statement of the strength of international cooperation safeguarding the peace and stability in South-Eastern Europe, an essential element of NATO's extensive process to consolidate its deterrence and defence posture in response to the major changes affecting the security environment at its borders.

The short history of this organization started during the Brussels NATO Summit, in July 2018, when Romania offered to develop a corps-level land command and control capability on its territory, integrated into the NATO Force Structure, capable of contributing to the defensive forces' operations planning in the Black Sea Region.

After the Headquarters activation as a NATO Military Body by the North Atlantic Council, in February 2021, the newly established structure went through several stages of its functional development, and in June 2021 the Initial Operational Capability was declared.

As a result of the achievement of the next operational stage, the end of 2022 sets up a new command and control architecture for HQ Multinational Corps South-East. Being a part of the security architecture on the Eastern flank of the Alliance, Multinational Corps South-East is playing a significant role, by providing command and control over its subordinate units as well as being responsible for Allied Forces' Reception, Staging and Onward Movement. Moreover, HQ MNC-SE is acting as NATO single point of contact for Host Nation relating matters in Bulgaria and Romania.

The headquarters of MNC-SE has significantly evolved since its establishment and as a result of the multinational commitment. Even if it is the youngest NATO Force structure, our organization is able to effectively respond to complex security risks and threats while adapting to future challenges of a dynamic security environment.



Exercise STEADFAST  
JUPITER 2023

Russian Federation’s unprovoked and brutal aggression of Ukraine has led to serious implications for the Alliance security, and caused NATO to increase its readiness and vigilance in response to this crisis. Allies have adopted a robust and capable military posture to deter – and, if necessary, defend against any threat posed to the Alliance territory and populations. As a consequence of these threats, HQ MNC-SE operational calendar has been accelerated.

Thus, Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East (HQ MNC-SE) participated, from 10 to 19 October 2023, in STEADFAST JUPITER 2023 (STJU23) NATO Exercise as part of the NATO force structure. The training event, attended by approximately 7,000 troops from 27 locations in Europe and

the United States of America, was NATO’s most complex Computer-Assisted/Command Post Exercise organized so far, in terms of the number of participants and the complexity of the scenario. STJU23 represented the final stage of certification of the Multinational Corps South-East Headquarters for accreditation as a corps-level combat structure able of providing command and control of NATO land operations at regional level, in any situation, during crisis or conflict.

Multinational Corps South-East permanently improves its readiness. Adopting a common and liberal set of values, we are definitely committed to the “NATO integrated and collective approach” because we truly are “Stronger Together”, the axiom being also our core motivating message.



*The peace and freedom can be guaranteed only by the full spectrum of political, military and civilian assets and, as George C. Marshalls said, “The price of peace is eternal vigilance”. Important elements for this desirable and optimum environment are the preparedness of our societies and our armed forces’ readiness.*

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Exercise STEADFAST  
JUPITER 2023







# The ROMANIAN LAND FORCES

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**T**he Romanian Land Forces were established 153 years ago; together with the other national military structures, the Romanian Land Forces have had the same fundamental mission: defending the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. According to legal regulations, the Romanian Land Forces accomplish a wide range of essential missions: supporting the central and local public administration authorities during emergency situations, assisting the population and managing the consequences of disasters and technological accidents; on the other hand, they are also actively involved in the effort of supporting the local and global security and defending the allies and partners within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union. In order to accomplish these missions, the Romanian Land Forces carry out a wide range of operations on land and airborne, independently and jointly, as part of national and multinational organizations, on the national territory or abroad.

## **THE ROMANIAN LAND FORCES' EQUIPMENT (TYPES OF TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT)**

Over the last two decades, the Romanian Land Forces have gone through many stages of reorganization which, among other things, have targeted the reorganization of the command system, the implementation of voluntary conscription, the operational integration into NATO and EU; the objectives of these processes are: modernizing the force structure, implementing a modern military education system, procuring military equipment and technologies.

The modernization and acquisition process, which has increased over the last ten years, reached its peak in 2020, when the units were equipped with the latest generation armored personnel carriers, and recently, with PATRIOT surface-to-air missile system. The revival began by increasing transportation and maintenance capacity, as well as updating communications and information systems. The mobility, firing capability, compatibility and interoperability of the Romanian Land Forces are presented as indicators of the



PIRANHA III

modernization of previous equipment or acquisition of the state-of-art one. The Romanian Land Forces have in their service both operational equipment manufactured at the end of the 20th century, such as armored amphibious transporters (TAB-71, TAB-77, TAB-79, TABC-79, TABB-33 ZIMBRUL, MLVM, MLI 84), tanks (TR-55, TR-85), anti-aircraft missile systems (2K12M KUB, 9K33M3 OSA-AKM, CA-95 / 9K31 STRELA, etc.), DAC and ROMAN trucks (in different configurations, traction variants, with different purposes , ranging from personnel and supply transport to equipment, pontoons, boats or towing installations such as guns, shells and missiles, radars, containers, communications equipment, generators, etc.), as well as modern and combat equipment made by either upgrading the older ones such as the TR 85 M1 BIZONUL, MLI 84M JDERUL, or by procuring new equipment, such as: IVECO and ROMAN trucks, URO VAMTAC, HMMWV, PANHARD PVP, WOLF vehicles, anti armor-mine MNRAP, PIRANHA IIIC and PIRANHA V armored personnel carriers and their derivatives, Volkswagen Transporter, LAROM, HIMARS, PATRIOT missile systems and batteries, self-propelled anti-aircraft systems, communication equipment and radio stations, etc.

The modern equipment employed by the Romanian Land Forces: 4X4 URO VAMTAC vehicle; HMMWV vehicle; 8X8 PIRANHA III C armored personnel carrier;

8X8 PIRANHA V armored personnel carrier; Armored vehicle 6X6 MRAP, COUGAR armored vehicle; MLI-84M “JDERUL” Infantry Fighting Vehicle; TR 85 M1 “BISON”; 2 X 35 AD “GEPARD” System; 2 X 35 AD Oerlikon “VIFORUL” system; LAROM artillery systems; VAMTAC S3 four-wheel vehicle; HARRIS RADIO station on CHEVROLET TAHOE chassis; PATRIOT surface-to-air missile system; The M142 HIMARS system.

## STRUCTURE OF THE ROMANIAN LAND FORCES

Currently, the Romanian Land Forces consist of infantry divisions, combat brigades, combat support brigades, logistic bases, communication centers, combat and logistic support battalions, as well as education and training structures. The command and control element of the Romanian Land Forces is the General Staff of the Land Forces Staff, located during peacetime in the capital Bucharest.

**Headquarters Multinational Division Southeast (HQ MNDSE)** is activated by the North Atlantic Council and placed under the operational command of Supreme Allied Commander Europe. As of March 22, 2018, it was placed under the operational control of Joint Force Command Naples and is prepared to provide command and control of NATO Article 5 – collective defence operations. Its Initial Capability was declared on July 1, 2016, and it reached Final Operational Capability on March 22, 2018. This multinational command is manned by officers, WOs, and NCOs from 15 participating nations: Albania, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States and Romania, which is the framework nation. The multinational structure includes formations and units, including the HQ Multinational Brigade Southeast, one of the most modern capabilities of the Romanian Armed Forces. The Headquarters of the Multinational Brigade South-East, located in Craiova garrison, was established following the decisions taken at the Warsaw Summit in 2016 through the reorganization of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mechanized Brigade “Rovine”. After an intense certification process, the Headquarters Multinational Brigade South – East reached its final operational capability in 2018. Currently, the Headquarters Multinational Brigade South–East is responsible for





providing command and control of a brigade-level structure conducting Art 5 collective defence operations, thus contributing to territorial security and the safety of the population from the South-East of the European continent. Military personnel from Bulgaria, Canada, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Hungary are assigned to the multinational structure. As a result of the integration of the brigade into the architecture of NATO units, one of its missions is to contribute to NATO Enhanced Forward Presence in Poland by providing an air defence detachment (on a rotational basis) to the US-led Battle Group NATO; it also contributes to the tailored Forward Presence, by hosting the Polish military contingent deployed on Romanian territory, within the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion “Neagoe Basarab”.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division “Getica”.** The large tactical level unit, based in the Buzău garrison, continues the tradition of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps, established during the First World War. Its longstanding existence has been marked by transformations, including periodic dismantling, but since 2020, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division “Getica” has been a large representative unit of the Romanian Army, its area of responsibility covering the East, South-East and South of Romania, comprising 21 counties and the capital city, Bucharest. It can be

stated that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division “Getica” defends the Romanian Eastern flank and, implicitly, part of the Eastern flank of the North Atlantic Alliance. Within the North Atlantic Alliance, the execution of the mission with its own units brought not only the unanimous recognition of the allied member states and other partner states, but has taken a heavy toll. Thus, 18 of the 30 heroes who lost their lives in the theaters of operations are part of the structures belonging to the 2<sup>nd</sup> “Getica” Infantry Division. Annual participation of 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division personnel in training activities, both domestically and abroad, has been steady. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division “Getica” consists of an armored brigade, two mechanized brigades, two mountain troop brigades, a logistic base, one ISR regiment, one air defence regiment, two mixed artillery regiments, one communications and information technology battalion, one engineer battalion, one CBRN defence and disaster response battalion, one logistics support battalion and an EOD group.

**4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division “Gemina”** is a large tactical unit, established in the historical capital of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca. Currently, the area of responsibility of the 4<sup>th</sup> “Gemina” Infantry Division covers the northern half of the country. The missions of the 4<sup>th</sup> “Gemina” Infantry Division are in accordance



Exercise COMBINED RESOLVE

with the provisions of the North Atlantic Alliance and includes, in addition to the objectives assumed at the national and international level, the provision of support and cooperation with central and local public authorities when addressing emergency situations. The exercises carried out within the 4th Infantry Division aim both at improving the individual and collective skills of the military personnel, as well as at increasing interoperability within its structures. Thus, at predetermined intervals, commanders and forces participate in complex training activities to improve the implementation of NATO-specific procedures. The 4th Infantry Division “Gemina” consists of two of the largest mechanized brigades, a mountain troops brigade, a logistic base, an ISR regiment, an air defence regiment, a mixed artillery regiment, a communications and intelligence battalion, an engineer battalion, a CBRN defence battalion, a logistics support battalion and an EOD group.

**18<sup>th</sup> Surveillance – Research Brigade “Decebal”** covers a wide range of missions in ground, air and naval environments. The brigade consists of reconnaissance & surveillance, mountain reconnaissance-surveillance, depth reconnaissance, air defence, sensor and logistics support battalions. Therefore, the soldiers are prepared to carry out research and surveillance missions, on rugged terrain, both in mountainous and maritime areas. Missions carried out in theaters of operations by the 18th Reconnaissance-Surveillance Brigade culminated in 2013 with the deployment of 1,200 fighters to Afghanistan. In order to ensure interoperability among the structures participating in these joint training exercises, NATO standard operating procedures are implemented. So far, the 18th Research-Surveillance Brigade has deployed an important number of military personnel in the main theaters of operations where the Romanian Army contributes to ensuring security and stability. A small unit of the brigade is also permanently

ready to intervene in NATO KFOR operations in Kosovo and EU ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**8<sup>th</sup> Mixed Artillery Brigade “Alexandru Ioan Cuza”** is a large land force artillery unit, subordinated to the Land Forces Staff, located in Focșani garrison. The 8<sup>th</sup> LAROM Brigade aims at providing fire support to the maneuver forces, within the operative force groups, by carrying out standard tactical missions and non-standard missions on the national territory, such as participation by order in emergency situations and relief missions in case of natural disasters and technological accidents. Following the 2010 reorganization, the large unit currently consists of: a brigade headquarters with a support small unit, three combat units, a combat support unit and a logistics support unit.

**10<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade “Dunărea de Jos”**, with its headquarters in Brăila, consists of the brigade headquarters, four engineer units, a river crossing unit and a logistic support unit. The brigade carried out a variety of specific engineering support missions in the theaters of operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq and Afghanistan, demonstrating that the expertise of Romanian engineers is at the same standard as that of allied partners. Currently, the 10<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade “Lower Danube” is involved in the implementation of international agreements and of the regional engineer specific initiatives and constantly participates in multinational exercises with NATO member states or partners, providing specialized expertise, troops and equipment.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Logistic Base “Valahia”**. Since its establishment in 2002, 2 Logistics Base “Valahia” has operated as a large unit, comprising units and small units designed to provide integrated logistic support. 2<sup>nd</sup> Logistic Base “Valahia” carried out logistical support missions for large units and for the Romanian Land Forces’ units that participated in stability and peacekeeping operations, in conflict or post-conflict environments, independently or within the multinational NATO, UN, EU. The current tasks of the large logistics unit are: purchasing goods and services, providing for the maintenance of vehicles, armaments, materials, ammunition and military equipment. 2<sup>nd</sup> Logistic Base “Valahia” annually conducts over 300 transport missions with 80-90 vehicles, covering up to 400,000 km and transporting over 4,000 tons of materials for the administration of



Exercise SABER GUARDIAN 23

more than 300 barracks, including both self-directed and outsourced repairs, reception, storage and distribution of goods.

**The National Joint Training Centre “Getica”**. This large unit, located in Cincu area, Brașov County, supports the training of national, allied and partner forces at joint, combined and multinational level, in accordance with national and NATO doctrines, by replicating a complex, current and realistic operational environment. The center has four firing ranges, with firing sectors and specific maneuvering areas and with specialized structures that arbitrate and make available to the commanders the results of the actual firing. The center develops specific scenarios and provides observers-controllers and instructors. The OPFOR battalion is a unique structure in the Romanian Army, necessary for the replication of conventional, hybrid and adaptable threats specific to the current operational environment. The Training Support Battalion provides real logistic support to all structures of the Joint National Training Center. By using the MILES/HITS/TESS real-world simulation system, the Center



Parachute  
insertion

develops dual-match exercises against a realistic and adaptive OPFOR to provide commanders with observations about the readiness of the units they command. Training exercises are conducted through “constructive simulation”, with a headquarters simulated in real conditions, which manages subordinate structures and controls the actions of all organic elements of computer-simulated combat personnel and equipment. The Joint National Training Center “Getica” has recently increased its training capabilities, completing several infrastructure projects with the help of French, Dutch, Belgian and American partners. Currently, the Joint National Training Center “Getica” is capable of conducting training and evaluation firing sessions with individual or group/crew armament, up to platoon level, as well as helicopter firings.

**1<sup>st</sup> CIMIC Battalion** is the only military unit within the Romanian Army specialized in the field of civil-military cooperation. The unit

performs three basic CIMIC functions: liaising with the civilian environment, supporting military structures and supporting civilian actors. In peacetime, according to NATO’s new CIMIC doctrine, the 1<sup>st</sup> CIMIC Battalion focuses on resilience and inter-agency cooperation. To achieve these objectives, the 1<sup>st</sup> CIMIC Battalion maintains constant collaboration with the US Civil Affairs teams located in Romania, practicing joint training and conducting specific actions in a real environment. Over the past few years, the unit has deployed teams of CIMIC specialists to theaters of operations in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, as well as UN-mandated military observers on the Ivory Coast, DR Congo, Georgia, Liberia and Sudan.

**The 265<sup>th</sup> Military Police Battalion “Tudor Vladimirescu”** is an elite unit of the Romanian Land Forces, destined to ensure the building, maintenance and development of the operational capacities of the troops necessary to

carry out military police missions in support of the large units and the national and/or NATO/EU units. Military policemen have gained a lot of experience by carrying out an entire spectrum of specific missions carried out over the years both domestically and abroad, especially in Somalia, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The 495<sup>th</sup> Parachute Battalion “Captain Ștefan Soverth” was created on November 30, 1990, the 495<sup>th</sup> Special Missions Battalion, subordinate to the 2nd Parachute Brigade. On May 3, 1996, the battalion was given the honorary name of “Captain Ștefan Șoverth”, and on May 17, 1996, the unit received the Battle Flag, subsequently undergoing several restructurings and names, the last transformation taking place on January 1, 2018, holding current name of the 495<sup>th</sup> Parachute Battalion “Captain Ștefan Șoverth”. Throughout its 30 years of existence, the 495<sup>th</sup> Parachute Battalion “Captain Ștefan Soverth” has participated in numerous domestic and international missions, annually performing international exercises with similar structures from England, Bulgaria, Portugal, Slovakia, Turkey, Poland, the USA, etc.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRUCTURES

“Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy proudly counts 176 years of experience and hard work in the field of military education in Romania, and over a century since its establishment in Sibiu. It is a higher military education institution integrated into the national education system, with university autonomy guaranteed by law and with legal personality, capable of organizing and conducting accredited bachelor’s and master’s programs and training commissioned officer leaders for the Romanian Land Forces, as well as other beneficiaries of the national defence system. “Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy organizes Bachelor Degree studies in Military Management, Military Sciences and Economic and Administrative Sciences and Master’s studies in Military Leadership, Military Capability Management, Management and Technology, as well as Organizational Intelligence specialties. It also offers programs for advanced studies, doctoral research and hosts other postgraduate studies.



Graduation Ceremony at Land Forces Academy

“Basarab I” Military School for Warrant Officers and Noncommissioned Officers has trained thousands of young high school graduates to become non-commissioned officers in the Romanian Land Forces, over the past 25 years. The main mission of the school is the primary training of subordinate warrant officers as specialists in the exploitation, repair and maintenance of armaments, technical equipment and assets, and non-commissioned officers as fighters, leaders of the structures laying at the basis of the military hierarchy; both categories are prepared to become resourceful trainers, go through all stages of their careers and meet the Army’s requirements.

“Mihai Viteazul” Multibranch Training School of the Land Forces. In accordance with the traditions of the old Officers’ School of the Armor Branch, the Multi-branch Training School ensures the initial and continuous training of active-duty military personnel,

as well as volunteer reserve forces of the Romanian Land Forces branches and MOS-es. Starting 2022, the school integrated into its structure the Maneuver Training Center, the Combat Support Training Center and 12 Training Center in the fields of Infantry, Armour, ISR, Paratroopers and JTAC, Artillery, Engineers, CBRN Defence, Mountain Troops, Communications and Information, Technology, Logistics, Military Police, EOD and C-IED, and Operational Medicine. All these provide for the training and specialization of professional military personnel in all military occupational specialties.

**“Ștefan cel Mare” National Military High-School.** Over the last 80 years, “Ștefan cel Mare” Câmpulung Moldovenesc National Military College has provided over 13,000 graduates. Most of them pursued the military career, more than 200 of the former graduates reaching the rank of general. Today, the high school offers a modern and efficient education, through the



Cadets from “Ștefan cel Mare”  
National Military High School

implementation of well-founded educational programs and a quality management system

### MULTINATIONAL MISSIONS AND EXERCISES

**Afghanistan.** Between 2002–2020, the Romanian Land Forces, along with other formations of the Romanian Armed Forces, have contributed with 30,000 troops by engaging brigade level structures (6 rotations), infantry battalion-level structures—maneuver and force protection (40 rotations), infantry companies (3 rotations), training detachments of the Afghan National Army and military police detachments (36 rotations, also with several detachments acting simultaneously in various Afghan provinces), “province reconstruction” teams (7 rotations), and other types of detachments and teams in the field of logistic support, military education, weaponry training, military counseling and staff training.

**Iraq.** Over 2003–2009, as part of the *Iraqi Freedom* stabilization and reconstruction operation, the Romanian Land Forces deployed infantry battalions (12 rotations), engineering detachments (6 rotations), infantry and mountain troop companies (4 rotations), staff personnel, liaison officers and officers designated to reorganize the ministries, thus, contributing with approximately 6,000 soldiers. By rotation, the Iraqi partners benefited from staff personnel and teams of instructors for the training of armor, engineer and artillery formations leaders.

**The Western Balkans.** Currently, the Romanian Land Forces have deployed within KFOR NATO a military police detachment, a strategic reserve detachment that is permanently placed at NATO’s disposal for Kosovo, as well as an intermediate reserve detachment for Bosnia. Under the EU mandate, in the Western Balkans, the Romanian Land Forces participate with staff personnel in Operation ALTHEEA in Bosnia-Herzegovina and with a reconnaissance team in Kosovo, within Operation KOSOVO FORCE.

**Poland.** The biggest challenge for the Romanian Land Forces is the participation with 120 air defence artillery soldiers, starting 2017, within the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group Poland, in order to secure consolidated forward positions on the North-Eastern flank of the Alliance, alongside the



Exercise SARMIS OLT 23

American, British, Croatian and Polish forces. So far, we have deployed more than ten Romanian air defence contingents to Poland. A number of over 250 soldiers of the Romanian Land Forces were expected to be deployed in 2023 in international missions.

Currently, the Romanian Land Forces are engaged in missions alongside other structures of NATO member countries and also participate in training and interoperability exercises, alongside representatives of other NATO member countries or partners.

In 2023, the Romanian Land Forces participated in the following international exercises:

**”SARMIS 23 / OLT 23”:** Multinational Exercise LIVEX “SARMIS 23 / OLT 23” was held over September 25-October 6, in the mountain area adjacent to Tărlung and Doftana valleys, close to the city of Braşov, in which

the defenders of the Carpathian ridges, the soldiers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> “Sarmizegetusa” Mountain Troop Brigade and 61<sup>st</sup> “General Virgil Bădulescu” Mountain Troop Brigade performed joint training activities together with allied and partner forces from the United States of America, Great Britain, France and the Republic of Moldova. The purpose of this type of exercise, which takes place annually in the training facilities of the Romanian Land Forces, is to verify and validate specific operational procedures, in mountainous forested terrain, in a multinational and inter-institutional context.

The new element of this year’s exercise was its inter-institutional character, through the participation of the County Gendarmerie Inspectorate’s structures, the Mobile Gendarmerie Group and the Emergency Situations Inspectorate of the Municipality of Braşov.



### Exercise ANAKONDA 23

Thus, the mountain troops trained in conditions simulating the reality and complexity of the current operational environment, in order to demonstrate interoperability and cohesion both with Romania's allies and partners, as well as with the other elements of the defence, public order and national security system.

"ANAKONDA 23" (Poland) is a multinational NATO exercise, conducted on the territory of Poland, in which Romania participated, in several training areas, with forces and means belonging to the 15th Mechanized Brigade "Podu Înalt", as well as with personnel of "General Ioan Emanoil Florescu" Joint Forces Command. "ANAKONDA 23" was a good opportunity to test and practice a variety of training sequences with our partners. The troops could also test and improve their readiness level by adapting quickly to all the demands of the exercise. The Romanian soldiers worked and trained alongside their Polish and Slovenian colleagues.

"ANAKONDA 23" is also called "Show a force". The expression translates into the fact that the citizens of

the eastern flank of the North Atlantic Alliance must notice that we are permanently prepared and at the same time, that they will be safe in the event of any threat or aggression.

"COMBINED RESOLVE XIX" (Germany): Approximately 120 Romanian soldiers, together with soldiers from NATO member countries and partners, participate, between October 10 and November 3, in Hohenfels, Germany, in "COMBINED RESOLVE XIX" Exercise. For the first time in our country, a division-level command point is deployed outside the country to participate in a multinational exercise.

The soldiers of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division "Gemina" Headquarters were joined by comrades from the 18<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance & Surveillance Brigade "Decebal", the 317<sup>th</sup> ISR Regiment "Vlădeasa", the 400<sup>th</sup> Support Battalion "Feleacu", the 55<sup>th</sup> Communications and Information Technology Battalion "Napoca" and the 1<sup>st</sup> CIMIC Battalion "General de corp de armată Ștefan Holban".



During the first days of the exercise, the Romanian scouts carried out a specific training sequence on helicopters, together with the soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division belonging to the United States Army.

The commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> “Gemina” Infantry Division, Brigadier General Bogdan Cernat, was close to the soldiers and their needs during the entire period of the preparation and conduct of the exercise, so that their training takes place in the best circumstances.

Based on a fictitious scenario, “COMBINED RESOLVE XIX” Exercise is a training event in which the large unit and the rest of participating units prove their readiness level in order to meet the NATO standards while conducting military operations in a joint and multinational context. The participation in the exercise is a real opportunity to develop cooperation relations with the NATO and partner structures and ensures the reaction capacity at tactical level and the interoperability of the participating forces, as well as the improvement of joint training and deployment capabilities.

“JUSTICE SWORD 23.II” (Romania): More than 1,600 soldiers and approximately 400 technical means of equipment belonging to the 282nd “Unirea Principatelor” Armored Brigade participated, over October 8–18, in Multinational Exercise “JUSTICE SWORD 23.II”, which took place in the Secondary Combat Training Center in Smârdan, Galati County. Soldiers of the Defence Staff’s subordinate structures

and of the 19<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Infantry Battalion of the Polish Armed Forces also participated in the exercise.

Conducted according to a fictitious scenario, Exercise “JUSTICE SWORD 23.II” is a training event held annually by the 282<sup>nd</sup> Armored Brigade and its subordinate structures, at the Secondary Combat Training Center Smârdan, in order to improve the planning, organization and management of the defensive and offensive military actions, in a joint and multinational context.

“SABER GUARDIAN 23” (Romania): The Romanian Land Forces participated with approximately 10.000 soldiers, of which 5,000 Romanian ones, with more than 1,700 technical means of equipment from Romania and thirteen Allied and partner nations – Albania, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Italy, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, the United States of America and the Netherlands – participated in SG23 Exercise, between May 29 and June 9. The exercise, conducted by “General Ioan Emanoil Florescu” Joint Forces Command, represents the largest and most complex multinational training activity of this year and took place in training ranges and military facilities located in Romania.

“SABER GUARDIAN 23” continues the series of exercises started in 2013 and is conducted biennially, being designed to enhance interoperability in a wide range of missions for NATO member and partner countries. The scheduled training activities include ground deployments in a tactical environment,

Exercise JUSTICE SWORD 23





Exercise JUSTICE SWORD 23

watercourse break-in, tactical exercises and combat tactical firing exercises executed with equipment employed by all Services, parachutings, as well as MEDEVAC and injured personnel treatment activities. The main sequences of the exercise will be conducted at “Getica” National Combat Training Center in Cincu, Braşov County, the Secondary Combat Training Center from Smârdan, Galaţi County, the Secondary Combat Training Center from Babadag, Tulcea County, “General Ion Bungescu” AD Training School, Ground-to-Air Firing Range from Capu Midia and the 57<sup>th</sup> “Mihail Kogălniceanu” Air Base from Constanţa County.

“SABER GUARDIAN 23” is integrated into “DEFENDER 23” group of exercises and represents the peak of professional training that includes the planning and organization stages initiated before the operational execution phases currently conducted. The exercise was preceded by the displacement phase, during May, of the troops and equipment on our country’s road, naval and air communication routes towards the training areas. “DEFENDER 23” is planned by US Army Europe Command (USEUCOM) and led by US Army Europe and Africa Command (USAREUR-AF). Exercise “SABER GUARDIAN 23” is included in the USAREUR-AF joint training exercise program with a view of increasing joint and multinational

interoperability with the Allied and partner nations’ armed forces.

**FIRE SHIELD 23 (Republic of Moldova):** Soldiers of the 335<sup>th</sup> “Alexandru cel Bun” Artillery Battalion from Botoşani, participated, over September 17-22, alongside soldiers of the National Armed Force of the Republic of Moldova and the United States’ Army, in “FIRE SHIELD 23” Exercise. The exercise, which took place in the Bulboaca Training Area of the Military Training Base of the National Army of the Republic of Moldova, aimed at fostering the abilities to act in a multinational framework, during which training activities and live firing artillery exercises were carried out both during the day and at night.

The exercise aimed at achieving interoperability and joint action capacity, improving the coordination process of military operations in a multinational framework, specific to peacekeeping missions, training jointly through NATO standard tactics and procedures, promoting the image of the Romanian Land Forces and developing military cooperation relations among Romania, the Republic of Moldova and the United States of America, taking into account the common interest in regional stability and security.

The joint training exercise for artillery structures is held annually, starting 2015, based on the agreement between the Government of Romania and the Government of the Republic of Moldova on military cooperation, signed on April 20, 2012.

**„WIND SPRING 23” (Romania):** Approximately 2,000 soldiers of the 81<sup>st</sup> “General Grigore Bălan” Mechanized Brigade, a structure subordinated to the 4<sup>th</sup> “Gemina” Infantry Division, with over 450 means of equipment, were trained, between October 2 and 22, in the “Getica” Joint National Training Center from Cincu, as part of “WIND SPRING 23” Exercise.

French soldiers deployed to Battle Group Romania were engaged within the exercise and participated in the joint training of the headquarters and its subordinate forces, being evaluated within the CREVAL process (Combat Readiness Evaluation).

In the opening speech, the brigade commander emphasized the importance of this year’s “WIND SPRING 23” Exercise, not only from the perspective of the joint training of the headquarters and its subordinate forces, but also from the perspective of the CREVAL

(Combat Readiness Evaluation) evaluation process, a multi-stage process in which the major unit and its subordinate units demonstrate their operational capability in meeting the NATO standards when conducting military operations in a joint and multinational context.

“ZIMBRU 23”: The soldiers of the 15<sup>th</sup> “Podul Înalt” Mechanized Brigade, from Iași, and its subordinate structures, were trained in the Secondary Combat Training Center from Smârdan, Galați County, as part of the “ZIMBRU 23” Exercise, over 15-30 September.

Solving certain tactical situations, conducting live combat firing and training exercises were the main activities planned and executed within the “ZIMBRU 23” Exercise. In order to fulfill the objectives and achieve the intended performance standards, the soldiers benefited from the support of IAR 330 helicopters and IAR 99 Falcon aircraft belonging to the 95<sup>th</sup> “Erou Căpitan Aviator Alexandru



Exercise ZIMBRU 23

Șerbănescu” and 57<sup>th</sup> “Mihail Kogălniceanu” Air Bases.

“ZIMBRU 23” represents the major training event in 2023, the tactical exercises and live firing exercises being just some of the challenges our soldiers will have to face.



Exercise SABER GUARDIAN

# The ROMANIAN AIR FORCE

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The Romanian Air Force, as an integrative part of the most powerful collective defence system in the world, develops into a new concept and acts in accordance with the policies set out by the National Security Strategy of Romania. Having a homogeneous and dynamic structure, the Romanian Air Force is a modern, consistent, tactical, operational and strategic component of the national defence system. Joint activities, multinational exercises and missions carried out in the theaters of operations, have proven, each time, the competence and professionalism of its airmen and airwomen.

**T**he Romanian Air Force main mission is to generate, use and sustain air power in combat operations, together with the Allies or the coalition partners. Not only that Romanian Air Force accomplishes its missions assigned within the national or collective defence arrangements, but it also supports civilian authorities during humanitarian crises.

The efficiency of a state's air power depends to a considerable extent on equipping the air force structures in accordance with their objectives and missions.

Romanian Air Force has proven to be an absolutely necessary entity in the evolution of the armed forces, and the national airspace defence must meet the expectations of the world strategic stage; mission accomplishment becomes paramount to all other considerations.

Aviation is gradually developing, constantly raising concerns and debates, inserting into the golden book of humanity truly spectacular achievements. In the following lines, we will enumerate the characteristics of the Romanian aircraft, depending on the purpose of the mission accomplished.

**F-16 Fighting Falcon.** The F-16 Fighting Falcon is an aircraft whose tactical performance was heavily tested in combat. This multi-role aircraft is a weapon system that covers the entire spectrum of missions. The capabilities of the aircraft, complemented by the tactics developed over time in accordance with the continuous modernization of the initial project, transformed the Falcon from an extremely capable aircraft into a complete combat system. The acquisition of this platform is a major step in increasing the capabilities of the Romanian Armed Forces and represents a transition stage towards the introduction of the 5th generation aircraft into the Romanian Air Force service. The F-16 program not only proves its strategic importance at national level, but also at regional level, strengthening Romania's ability to respond in an appropriate manner to the deterrence and defence requirements specific to the Black Sea region.



.....  
F-16 Fighting Falcon



.....  
Romanian C 130 Hercules airlift aircraft



.....  
Romanian C 27 J Spartan medium-sized aircraft

**Transport aircraft** carry out airlift missions for the benefit of the Air Force and other elements of the National Defence System, in the national airspace and in crisis or conflict zones, within UN, OSCE or NATO mandated missions, as well as

missions carried out in support of local institutions and authorities during civil emergency situations. The following aircraft belong to this category:

**C-130 Hercules** is an impressive, solid and reliable aircraft, intended for tactical support of troops. carries out logistic support, air raid and medical evacuation missions. This type of aircraft entered the Romanian Air Force's service starting 1996.

The **C-27J Spartan** aircraft is a remarkable aircraft with superior maneuverability and tactics. It is intended to carry out tactical missions, peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, ensuring air transport directly into the theater of operations, both during day and at night.

**Antonov An-30** is a member of the An-24 aircraft family, being designed for aerial photography missions. The aircraft has got a metallic structure and is equipped with a wide range of sensors in the visible and infrared spectrum, integrated into the fuselage. The Romanian Air Force is currently using the aircraft for geodesic missions under the "Open Skies" agreement.

Antonov An-26 plane was initially known as the An-24 T, but it was equipped with Ivchenko engines, more powerful and having a completely redesigned rear fuselage to accommodate a sizeable hatch. Originally intended for the transport of goods with parachute capabilities, the aircraft can be easily adapted to the transport of passengers, MEDEVAC or to the transport of paratroopers.

## TRAINING AIRCRAFT

**IAK-52.** The aircraft is a monoplane type, entirely metallic, except for the control surfaces. The cabin is arranged with two independent pilot stations, the front one being intended for the student. The aircraft has been a Romanian Air Force asset since 1985, now being used as a training aircraft at the "Aurel Vlaicu" Air Force Training School.

**IAR-99 ŞOIM.** The development of this advanced training and light attack aircraft started in the 1970, being the first reactive aircraft

designed and manufactured entirely in Romania. The first prototype conducted the first flight on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1985. IAR-99 is a fully metallic aircraft, simple from a constructive point of view.

**IAR-316.** Starting with 1971, ICA Brasov manufactured about 250 helicopters under the name of IAR 316 B, both for the Romanian Air Force and for other institutions or external beneficiaries. ICA Brasov, together with other Romanian companies, developed a helicopter weapons program delivered to the Romanian Air Force.

**IAR-330.** In the 1970s, Romania bought the license to build the SA 330 Puma, locally named IAR 330 Puma Helicopter. Initially designed as a medium sized helicopter, the SA330 Puma and the IAR version were transformed into many other different versions exceeding their initial mission. The Romanian Air Force currently employs several versions of the IAR 330 Puma, the most advanced being the SOCAT helicopter gunship. The main mission of the SOCAT is anti-tank warfare but can also perform Close Air Support (CAS), Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR), Search and Rescue (SAR) and troops and materials transport. The SOCAT program is an upgrade developed in the 1990s by IAR Brasov and Elbit Systems, which transforms the IAR 330 into a modern, multi-mission, helicopter gunship.

## THE AIR FORCE STRUCTURE

The Air Force structure includes an Air Operational Component, four Fighter Air Bases, one Surface-to-Air Missile Brigade and one Patriot Regiment. Combat Support Units includes one Air Transport Base, one ISR Brigade and Engineering entities.

Education and Training Units are the Air Force Academy, the Aeronautical Personnel's Training Base and the Warrant Officer and NCO School, Military High School and the National Training Center for GBAD, including the AF firing range.

The main mission of **86<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE BASE** is to defend the airspace in the South-East area of Romania. Starting with September 2016, this unit has been equipped with F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter aircraft. This military aviation unit is recognized for the professionalism of military personnel. In July 2019 the the Romanian Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft

began conducting the Air Policing missions, under NATO command.

The missions of **71<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE BASE** are: discovering, identifying and combating illicit acts of the flight regime in the national space; maintaining the integrity of NATO airspace; navigation assistance for military and civilian aircraft; humanitarian actions and search, rescue, evacuation missions in case of natural disasters or disasters, connection and air transport of troops, aerial research of areas or districts, ensuring and maintaining the availability of the infrastructure and utility elements of the airfield.

The **95<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE BASE** dates back more than 90 years, initially under the name of the Aviation Training Center. It has the mission to defend the national airspace, provide support to state institutions and



IAK-52

IAR-99 ȘOIM





Graduation Ceremony at  
Air Force Academy

local authorities during emergencies and ensure flight training of pilots.

The **57<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE BASE “MIHAIL KOGĂLNICEANU”** coordinates the aeronautical activities in the area of responsibility, assures the Host Nation’s Support for the armed forces transiting our national territory and represents the interface between the foreign armed forces carrying out activities on the airfield and the locally represented public authorities.

The **90<sup>th</sup> TRANSPORT AIR FORCE BASE** performs air transportation missions for the Romanian Air Force and other elements of the National Defence System, both in the national airspace and in crisis or conflict areas, within ONU, OSCE or NATO mandated missions, as well as missions in support of local institutions and authorities during civil emergency situations.

The **70<sup>th</sup> ENGINEERING CENTER** provides engineering support and EOD to the Air Force units, state institutions or local authorities. The 70<sup>th</sup> Engineering Center participated with personnel and equipment in several engineering support missions in different places.

The **76<sup>th</sup> RESEARCH, SURVEILLANCE AND RECONNAISSANCE BRIGADE** was formed by merging and reorganizing several military units, thus, achieving a homogenous and powerful entity. The unit provides the

collection, processing and dissemination of information in the Air Force area of responsibility.

The **74<sup>th</sup> PATRIOT REGIMENT** was established on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. The establishment of the new unit has been an important step in creating the missile capability of the Romanian Armed Forces, the 74<sup>th</sup> PATRIOT Regiment being the first structure holding the newest configuration of the ground-to-air missile system.

## EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING STRUCTURES

The mission of military education is to train officers, warrant officers and non-commissioned officers with professional competences in accordance with the requirements and needs of the military structures, corresponding to the specific qualifications of the military occupational specialties (MOS-es), with the potential to become creative, innovative personalities, determined to obtain performance and generate value.

The vocational training system in the Ministry of National Defence is structured on educational cycles and levels and includes:

- ✓ pre-academic study programs: high school;
- ✓ academic programs, postgraduate studies.



The education and training units are the Air Force Academy, the Aeronautical Personnel Training Base, the Air Force WO & NCO Military School “Traian Vuia”, the National Military College “Mihai Viteazu” and the Air Defence National Training Center.

The training program within the domestic educational process comprises the following main modules: the pre-academic, academic training program, the military training program, the specialized training program with the flight internships and the training program for the assignment into the military aeronautic personnel’s first position.

The initial training starts from the desks of the **NATIONAL MILITARY COLLEGE “MIHAI VITEAZU”**, where the students build their destiny under the auspices of the performance. In 2018, the National Military College “Mihai Viteazu” from Alba Iulia was placed into the subordination of the Air Force Staff, changing the red patches on the students’ uniform, with the blue ones. For 100 years, the military college has formed people, characters, destinies and values. It is the place where young people make their way to future military careers. Throughout its existence, the military college has prepared more than 7,200 graduates.

The **AIR FORCE ACADEMY “HENRI COANDĂ”** is a higher military education institution, located in Brasov, whose mission is to train the officers licensed for the basic branches of the Air Force and other beneficiaries.

Another institution: the **AERONAUTIC PERSONNEL TRAINING BASE**. After completing the studies of the Air Force Academy, all graduates must attend a 6–12 month basic course at the Aeronautic Personnel Training Base, where they get specialized for their first job. This base carries out educational activities in the accredited fields and specialties.

Another form of training within the military training and education system takes place at the **AIR FORCE WO & NCO MILITARY SCHOOL “TRAIAN VUIA”**. Located in Boboc, it is the only institution that develops WOs and NCOs for the Air Force needs and for other beneficiaries. The school provides a vocational higher education for high school graduates, being part of the national education system. The school develops Warrant Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers as

specialists in the employment and maintenance of the equipment.

**NATO AIR POLICING** is a type of mission launched in 2014, executed in several countries on the Eastern flank of the Alliance. Within the Alliance, preserving airspace integrity is conducted as a collective task using aircraft for Air Policing, as a purely defensive mission. Allies have increased the efficiency of this mission by sending their interceptors and required support in Romania to perform extended Air Policing tasks within the framework of the Readiness Action Plan. The missions have been conducted in a safe and highly professional manner.

## **EFTC – EUROPEAN F-16 TRAINING CENTER**

Building upon the resolutions established during the NATO Summit in July 2023, Romania proudly serves as the host nation for the European F-16 Training Center established at the 86th Air Base in Borcea.

Functioning as a pivotal international hub for F-16 pilot training, the center is strategically designed to enhance interoperability among allies. Simultaneously, it plays a crucial role in fostering common operational standards and enhancing the North Atlantic Alliance’s capabilities to address the intricate challenges prevalent in the Black Sea region and Eastern Europe.

Pursuant to the terms outlined in the collaborative agreement, the Romanian Ministry of Defence extends its support by providing the 86th Air Base, training facilities, and host nation support. The Royal Netherlands Air Force provides the F-16 aircraft, while the Lockheed Martin Company assumes responsibility for supplying instructors and maintenance services. The European F-16 Training Center in Romania assumes a vital role in the comprehensive training of Romanian pilots, ensuring that the nation’s air force undergoes training at the highest standards. This collaborative effort emphasizes Romania’s unwavering commitment to collective defence and NATO’s security objectives.

On November 7, the inaugural set of five Dutch F-16s executed a flawless landing at Air Base 86, marking the commencement of their deployment for the pilots’ training at the center.

“In this facility, we’re molding the future cadre of F-16 pilots. It’s not just about initiating rookies into

the world of F-16s; we're conducting refresher courses for seasoned F-16 pilots as well. This encompasses everything from formation leader courses for two and four aircraft formations to courses leading to the coveted flight instructor qualification. Given the prevailing geopolitical landscape, especially along NATO's eastern frontier, this center is a welcome addition. We take great pride in Romania and, by extension, the 86<sup>th</sup> Air Base hosting this critical endeavor. The instructors steering this center are former military pilots coming from NATO member nations. These are battle-tested, operational aviators boasting extensive flight hours, and there's a wealth of knowledge we can glean from them. We're optimistic that this collaboration will be mutually beneficial for all parties involved," the Head of the European F-16 Training Center stated.

The formal inauguration of the European F-16 Training Center was marked by a ceremony attended by the Minister of National Defence, Angel Tîlvăr, alongside the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Daniel Petrescu, and the Chief of the Air Force Staff, Lieutenant General Viorel Pană. Also Ambassadors of Denmark, the Netherlands, the United States and Ukraine, along with representatives from the American aerospace company Lockheed Martin also attended the ceremony.

Minister Tîlvăr emphasized, "Our air force benefits from the pinnacle of training, enhancing its readiness against any potential threat. The center assumes a pivotal role in the training of Romanian F-16 pilots, extending beyond mere operation to encompass the full spectrum of these high-performance aircraft." He elaborated on the training of a "significant number of pilots" and the "intense" pace of training, highlighting the acquisition of "new qualifications for those already operating the F-16 in Romania." Additionally, Minister Tîlvăr disclosed ongoing assessments for the most effective integration methods for the training of Ukrainian pilots.

"We are commencing our training with Romanian pilots, but our objective extends to the training of Ukrainian pilots as well. This is imperative as the Netherlands, alongside partner countries Denmark and Norway, is gearing up to deliver F-16 to Ukraine. Urgently bolstering our air force is a top priority, and training initiatives are already underway in Denmark and the USA. I am thrilled that we now have this European



center," declared the Dutch Minister of Defence, Kajsa Ollongren, who was present at the inaugural event.

The Romanian government has initiated a memorandum, approving a budget exceeding 450 million lei for "establishing and operating the pilot training facility dedicated to F-16 aircraft operations at the 86<sup>th</sup> Borcea Air Base." This financial allocation encompasses various necessities such as ammunition, travel expenses for both domestic and international missions, specialized protective and operational gear, security services, maintenance of military equipment,



F-16 Fighting Falcon

utilities including water, energy, and gas bills, as well as expenditures for fuels and lubricants essential for the equipment.

This groundbreaking project, a pioneering initiative at European level, signifies a significant milestone for the Romanian-Dutch cooperation and serves as a tangible manifestation of allied solidarity. Concurrently, it promises to expedite the training process for Romanian pilots tasked with operating the F-16 aircraft acquired by Romania from Norway, soon to be integrated into the Romanian Air Force's inventory.

## ROMANIA RECEIVES THE FIRST THREE F-16 AIRCRAFT PURCHASED FROM NORWAY

On Wednesday, November 29, the first three F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft purchased by Romania from the Kingdom of Norway landed at the 86<sup>th</sup> "Lieutenant Aviator Gheorghe Mociorniță" Air Base, in Borcea. On this occasion, the reception ceremony of the fighter aircraft was attended by Romanian, Norwegian and American officials.

The acquisition of the new batch of F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft and the related package of goods and services will ensure the increase of Romania's security through the execution of missions designated to defend the national/ NATO airspace during peacetime and crisis situations, by the Permanent Air Police Combat Service under NATO command.



F-16 Fighting Falcon

Brigadier General Valeriu Roșu, the Deputy Chief of the Department for the Liaison with the Parliament and the Personnel's Welfare, emphasized the importance of the "Multirole Aircraft of the Air Force" Program and specified that, in a dynamic and particularly complex security context, the completion of the Romanian Air Force's equipping process with the second and third squadrons of F-16 aircraft will further strengthen international partnerships, by "becoming a model of collaboration and

solidarity among Allies, in the consolidated effort to counter the challenges posed in the region". "I am honored to welcome the Norwegian officials to Romania, on behalf of the Minister of National Defence, Angel Tîlvăr said prior to the National Day. Norway is an important ally for Romania, bilateral defence cooperation ensuring consistency to the extensive process of modernization and development of our country's Defence capabilities", Brigadier General Valeriu Roșu stated.

Eivind Vad Petersson, State Secretary in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, appreciated that this is an important day for Norwegian-Romanian cooperation and for the security of the allies. "The Norwegian Government appreciates the importance of this program for Romania and remains fully committed to the delivery of all 32 aircraft, along with the support required to develop this capability over the following years," State Secretary Petersson stated.

According to the Concept for the gradual building of the air defence capability, within the "Air Force Multirole Aircraft " Program, the Government of Romania awarded the Government of the Kingdom of Norway the contract for the purchase of 32 F-16 aircraft, with initial logistical support and a package of complementary goods and services (from the Government of the United States of America). The aircraft that will be delivered must be operable, with their available resource ensuring their operation for a transition period of at least 10 years to the fifth generation aircraft, which makes the purchase of Norwegian fighter jets a transfer of capability between two allied NATO countries.

The aircraft will ensure the fulfillment of the new existing requirements established at NATO level, following to be introduced into the modernization program in the same configuration (M6.X) as the F-16 aircraft from the



Exercise European Spartan 2023

first squadron, which had already entered the service of the Romanian Air Force. This solution ensures the involvement of the national defence industry in the maintenance and modernization works of F-16 aircraft, through Aerostar Bacău Company.

So far, the Romanian Air Force has purchased 17 F-16 aircraft, according to the provisions of the Concept for the gradual building of the air defence capability within the “Air Force Multirole Aircraft” Program.

## A NEW C-130 HERCULES FOR THE ROMANIAN AIR FORCE

Through the Excess Defence Articles Program, the Romanian Air Force received a third C-130H2 Hercules military transport aircraft at no cost. This program enables the United States to donate or transfer surplus military equipment to allied or friendly nations with minimal or no financial burden.

The donation of the C-130H Hercules aircraft signifies a manifestation of solidarity and enduring collaboration in the field of security between Romania and the United States. It underscores their mutual commitment to regional stability and security,

emphasizing the U.S. recognition of Romania as a strategic partner and a key ally within NATO. This initiative supports Romania’s ongoing efforts to modernize its defence capabilities. The second C-130H Hercules aircraft was delivered on September 15, followed by the third in November. An American mobile training team conducted training sessions at the 90th Airlift Base, collaborating with the Romanian crew to acquaint them with the new onboard equipment. Currently, the Romanian Air Force operates four C-130B transport aircraft and three C-130H aircraft.

The C-130H Hercules is a versatile and dependable transport aircraft with the capability to execute various missions, including airlift, medical evacuation, humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

## ROMANIAN AIR FORCE MISSIONS IN 2023

**EUROPEAN SPARTAN 2023.** The European Spartan 2023 tactical Exercise, which is part of the EDA’s dedicated C-27J project, designed for the joint training of C-27J Spartan aircraft users, was conducted over October

2-13, 2023, at the 90th Airlift Base, in Otopeni, marking the second time Romania has hosted the exercise.

The current edition featured the participation of three countries—Romania, Bulgaria, and Italy—bringing together aircraft, flight crews, and technical personnel. Additionally, two countries, Lithuania and Greece, contributed with military observers to enhance interoperability in tactical operations and maintenance procedures.

The Spartan Exercise is focused on peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, training C-27J crews to fly low level tactical navigation in different scenarios. The European Spartan 2023 exercise was structured around a simulated scenario featuring a theater of operations. Missions encompassed the deployment of paratroopers, the release of containers, insertion of special operations forces into combat within the theater of operations, and MEDEVAC situations. Approximately eighty percent of the exercise focused on medical evacuation missions.

Major (AF) Mihai Vîrdol, Chief Pilot of the 902nd Aviation Transport Squadron and Commander of the Romanian detachment, highlighted the multinational nature of the exercise. He stated, “This exercise is a multinational endeavor, involving the majority of countries utilizing the C-27J Spartan platform. Its aim is to foster shared experiences and lessons learned among pilots, military personnel, engineers, and paratroopers – essentially all personnel associated with this aircraft.”

An additional noteworthy aspect of the exercise was the collaboration with foreign military participants. “We collaborated seamlessly; In INTEL, for instance, there was military representation from Lithuania and Romania. The White Cell, a component aiding INTEL in mission preparation, included personnel from all participating countries. The shared experience culminated in an extraordinary exercise,” Major (AF) Mihai Vîrdol emphasized.

Continuous training at Spartan constitutes a pivotal process, each exercise serving as a significant stage in the preparation of pilots and use of techniques. While this year’s exercise took place on a familiar territory, usually, it occurs on foreign terrain, presenting a unique challenge, particularly in terms of demanding low-altitude flying. The exchange of experience among

pilots, even when using the same standards, remains crucial in the training of military aviators.

The European Spartan 2023 exercise unfolded as part of the European Air Transport Fleet (EATF) program.

“The exercise achieved a heightened level of multinational interoperability support and increased readiness for future operational challenges. Over the past few weeks, a total of 21 missions, including medical evacuation one, were executed and completed. 52 flight hours were logged under simulated enemy threats. Behind these numbers lie numerous hours of dedicated and hard professional work by all involved. This recognition extends to aircrews, MEDEVAC teams, maintenance personnel, operations personnel, mission planners, logisticians, communications officers, intelligence officers, combat control teams, public relations personnel, air traffic controllers, weather office, and other units in the ROAF and other nations”, declared EDA (European Defence Agency) representative Javier Francisco at the conclusion of the exercise.

In 2015, Romania initiated its involvement in EDA programs pertaining to military transport aviation.

“We’ve witnessed the advantages of EDA participation through these exercises, showcasing experienced crews capable of executing challenging missions and successfully meeting various national and international assessments”, Colonel (AF) Tecuceanu stated.

**BALTICA 2023 – MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.** A Romanian Air Force Carpathian Vipers Detachment consisting in four F-16 multirole fighter aircraft and a contingent of 100 military personnel executed a deployment to Šiauliai Air Base, Lithuania over April-July 2023. During this period, they assumed responsibility for the enhanced Air Policing Service in the Baltic States.

Air Policing operations in the Baltic States represent one of the five regional NATO Air Policing missions, alongside the ones conducted in the Eastern Adriatic, the Western Balkans, Iceland, and Benelux. The primary objective is to maintain a certain state of readiness known as Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) to swiftly respond to potential airspace violations within the Alliance member states.

Air Policing operations in the Baltic States are conducted as part of NATO’s integrated air and missile defence network.

Over the 122-day mission, the Romanian aircraft of the Carpathian Vipers detachment completed 344 remarkable sorties, amassing a total flight time of nearly 600 hours. The very first interception mission was conducted during the initial week after assuming responsibility from our French partners.

Throughout the four-month deployment, the F-16 fighter jets maintained a specific state of combat readiness known as Readiness Status (RS). The detachment's mission revolved around safeguarding the airspace integrity of the Baltic States, signifying a vital element of NATO's unwavering commitment to its member nations. The F-16 fighter jets maintained a continuous vigilance, offering early warning and intervention capabilities to clarify the aerial situation. They employed lawful measures to deter and address

any aircraft attempting unauthorized entry into Baltic airspace.

Carpathian Vipers played a pivotal role in enhancing the security of the Baltic States' airspace during the Summit by executing the enhanced Air Police mission alongside combat aircraft from various allied nations.

The repatriation ceremony of the Carpathian Vipers Detachment took place on August 8<sup>th</sup>, at the headquarters of the 86th "Lieutenant Aviator Gheorghe Mociorniță" Air Base, in Borcea. The concluding ceremony of this four-month mission served as a testament to the unwavering professionalism and dedication displayed by the soldiers of the Carpathian Vipers. This marked the successful culmination of the Romanian F-16 aircraft's deployment in a theater of operations for the execution of a NATO mission.

Romania provides crucial support for NATO's enhanced vigilance activities on the eastern flank. Romania has been hosting Allied fighter detachments since 2014, when the Alliance started flying enhanced Air Policing sorties out of Romanian air bases. Since then – and more so in the present geopolitical situation – Romanian Air Force fighter aircraft have been securing Allied skies alongside British, Canadian, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and United States jets.



# The ROMANIAN NAVAL FORCES, active contributor to regional security and stability



.....  
Training ship "Mircea"



In order to provide for the freedom of navigation on the Black Sea and Danube River, the Romanian Naval Forces are able to fulfil the following missions and tasks: evacuate the Romanian citizens from conflict areas around the world, participate in regional cooperation initiatives, support the national governmental organizations in case of natural disaster and conduct search and rescue operations at sea and on the river.

## STRUCTURE, AT A GLANCE

In order to accomplish the assigned missions and tasks, Romanian Naval Forces are organized on a four-pillar structure. The first pillar comprises the combat assets, representing the backbone of our Naval Forces, which are the Fleet, the River Flotilla and their combat ships squadrons, as well as the combat support units. The second pillar consists of specialized structures, directly subordinated to the Naval Forces Staff. The third pillar is represented by the Logistic component, with the Naval Logistics Base and other support units. Last, but not least, is the Naval Education, including its latest facility: the Navy High School, re-established after 20 years, providing an outstanding opportunity for our youngsters to join the Romanian Naval Forces at a very early age, and also the Naval Academy, Petty Officers' School and Naval Training School.

There are 9,000 personnel within the Romanian Naval Forces, assigned in more than 40 military units. The Maritime Fleet has almost 20 warships, three frigates (02 Type 22R, ex-Royal Navy Type 22 Batch 2, and 01 Romanian project, "Mărășești"), four "Tetal" class corvettes, three "Tarantul" class missile corvettes, three "Epitrop" class torpedo boats, one "Corsar" class minelayer, four "Musca" class minesweepers, one frigate support ship and three harbour tugs. In addition, The Maritime Fleet has four Mobile Launching Installations and three Puma Naval Helicopters IAR 330, which operate with the frigates.



Puma Naval Helicopters IAR 330

The second combat asset is the Riverine Flotilla, which consists of three "Mihail Kogalniceanu" class river monitors, five "Brutar" riverine patrol monitors, twelve "VD 141" class river patrol minesweepers, and a Marines Regiment with many amphibious "TABC-79" and "TAB-71M" and riverine fast boats.

Our Naval Forces have one support ship for divers, one oceanographic research ship, one tactical transport ship, three fleet oilers which offer logistics support and training ship "Mircea", "The Jewel" of Romanian Naval Forces, built in Hamburg, in 1939, used for training purposes.

## THE MOST IMPORTANT TREASURE OF THE ROMANIAN NAVAL FORCES, THE HUMAN RESOURCE

Through missions professionally performed by its personnel, Romania is recognized as a credible partner in the Allied and International community. The appreciation received by the Romanian service members, from the North-Atlantic Alliance, with respect



Operation SEA GUARDIAN



Operation  
EUNAVFOR  
MED IRINI

to the Navy, is a proof that the Romanian Naval Forces knows how to capitalize on one of its most important resources in the field of security, namely the human resource.

Our educational and training system is made of four institutions, such as “Mircea cel Bătrân” Naval Academy (MBNA), “Admiral Ion Murgescu” Naval Petty Officers School (NPOS), “Vice Admiral Constantin Bălescu”,

Navy Training School and “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” National Military College. The MBNA is a polytechnic higher education establishment that provides education and training to the engineer-officers of the Romanian Navy, Coast Guard and the Merchant Marine by conferring the bachelor and master degrees. Due to its academic vocation, MBNA is pursuing research and development programmes in the field of naval engineering, marine engineering, naval logistics and management. MBNA comprises two faculties: Navigation and Naval Management Faculty and Marine Engineering Faculty, where the military cadets are enrolled.

For the Romanian Naval Forces, the investment in education represents both an anchor of stability in the national education system, and an important investment in the future of our institution. At “Mircea cel Bătrân” Naval Academy, for the first time, international military cadets from Bulgaria, Lithuania and Poland carried out their studies for one semester alongside the Romanian military students in the Navy’s higher educational institutions, during academic year 2021-2022, as part of the Erasmus+ and EMILYO programs. Starting from 2022-2023 academic year, another important achievement of the Navy higher educational system was the English-language taught study program “Navigation, Hydrography and Naval Equipment”, with 30 seats, out of which 15 are foreigners.

The Naval Petty Officers School provides scientific training at post high-school level, trains technicians and work managers skilled to maintain, repair and operate systems and subsystems. Training in nine specialities is provided, as follows: Steering and navigation equipment; Naval gunnery; Naval missiles; Underwater weapons; Radio communications and naval surveillance and signalling; Naval radars; Electronic underwater equipment; Naval engines and auxiliary machines; Naval electrical engines and equipment. The training lasts two years, and it provides the Petty



Military Parade at “Mircea cel Bătrân”  
Naval Academy

Officers with a high sense of duty, integrity and loyalty for the Naval Forces.

“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” National Military College prepares students for the military lifestyle and for the entrance examination into the military higher educational institutions. The military college is integrated into the national system of education, and has two specializations: Mathematics and Computer Science.

Last, but not the least, there is “Vice admiral Constantin Bălescu” Navy Training School, which provides training to the junior officers and enlisted personnel, throughout their career in the Romanian Naval Forces, by means of programs and courses specially tailored to suit the needs of the Navy, in accordance with national educational policies and Euro-Atlantic commitments, in order to assure a continuous long-life learning process required by nowadays standards.

## MISSIONS AND EXERCISES CONDUCTED BY THE NAVAL FORCES IN 2023

The Romanian Naval Forces are an important pillar in the regional security system architecture and of the South-Eastern flank of the North Atlantic Alliance. After

the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, the Romanian Naval Forces quickly adapted their activity plans and operational procedures in order to effectively respond to various threats posed in the maritime space and in the lagoon area.

Currently, the Romanian Naval Forces have a capable, flexible and credible structure, which, together with its Euro-Atlantic partners, significantly contributes to the strengthening of the level of security in its area of responsibility, by participating in multinational exercises conducted on the South-Eastern flank of the Northern Atlantic Alliance and in the EU and NATO-led operations, carried out in the Mediterranean Sea, such as Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI and Operation SEA GUARDIAN, in which Frigate “King Ferdinand” and Frigate “Regina Maria” participated in 2023.

At the same time, the Romanian Naval Forces participated with ships and personnel in multinational exercises conducted in the Black Sea, in the lagoon area and on the Danube River, under national or allied command: SEA SHIELD, POSEIDON, SABER GUARDIAN, EP MCM DIVE, SEA BREEZE, BREEZE and BALTOPS.

“Regina Maria” Frigate



## MONITORING MISSIONS CONDUCTED IN THE BLACK SEA TO ENSURE FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION

In 2023, the Romanian Naval Forces carried out, in a systematic way, research actions in the vicinity of the Romanian coast, in order to identify navigational hazards, especially drifting sea mines, originating from the Northern area of the Black Sea.

The package of forces made available by the Romanian Naval Forces for the monitoring activities consists of military ships, IAR-330 Puma Naval helicopters, maritime research drones, EOD combat divers detachments (specialized in countering explosive devices) and a mine warfare data center.

The maritime area of responsibility of the Romanian Naval Forces includes the territorial waters, the contiguous area and the exclusive economic zone of the Black Sea, with an area of approximately 30,000 km<sup>2</sup>. From the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine until

the end of 2023, Romanian sailors and military divers neutralized five sea mines drifting from the north of the Black Sea.

## MULTINATIONAL EXERCISE SEA SHIELD 2023, COMPLEX COMBAT SCENARIOS IN THE BLACK SEA AND THE DANUBE

Multinational Exercise SEA SHIELD 2023, the business card of the Romanian Naval Forces, took place between March 20<sup>th</sup> and April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, and consisted in practicing the NATO standard combat procedures on land, air and at sea. Approximately 3,400 military personnel and representatives of several institutions from the national defence system, as well as from 12 other allied and partner states (Albania, Bulgaria, France, Georgia, Greece, Poland, Portugal, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of Turkey and the United States of America)



performed complex training activities in the area of responsibility, at sea and on the river.

More than 30 Romanian military ships, two military ships of the Bulgarian Naval Forces and 14 aircraft from France, the Republic of Turkey, Romania and the United States of America, 15 fast intervention craft and patrol boats belonging to the national defence system institutions, approximately 60 military vehicles and other combat capabilities, such as mobile launchers, special operations forces and IED divers detachments, CBRN defence specialists (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) as well as infantry and paratroops platoons took part in SEA SHIELD 2023 training sequences planned by the Romanian Naval Forces.

Multinational Exercise SEA SHIELD 2023 was the most complex training activity and contributed to the promotion of Romania's initiatives and interests at regional and international levels, as well as to the increase of interoperability among the participating forces.





Training Ship "Mircea"

## **"KING FERDINAND" FRIGATE, PART OF OPERATION UE EUNAVFOR MED IRINI, IN THE MEDITERRANEAN**

"King Ferdinand" Frigate, with an IAR-330 Puma Naval helicopter and a group of Special Forces Operators onboard, participated, over 15 May-16 June 2023, in the Mediterranean Sea,

in Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI to improve the security situation in the Mediterranean Sea and to support the joint effort to cease conflict in Libya, in order to meet the commitments undertaken by our country within the European Union.

The mission performed by the frigate's crew, made up of 239 members, consisted in ensuring compliance with the UN (United Nations Organization) arms embargo imposed on Libya and in combating the illicit trafficking of petroleum products, drugs and people, by monitoring the maritime traffic and performing inspections onboard commercial ships in the Mediterranean Basin.

The Romanian frigate traveled approximately 6,000 nautical miles throughout the EU-led operation and conducted interrogations of more than 160 commercial ships. "King Ferdinand" Frigate also carried out joint activities with the partner ships of the naval standing group of the operation, the flagship of the naval group, LIBECCIO Trigate from Italy, the German logistic support BONN ship and the Greek NIKIFOROS Frigate FOKAS.

## **TRAINING SHIP "MIRCEA", INTERNATIONAL TRAINING MARCH IN THE MEDITERRANEAN**

Training Ship "Mircea" carried out, between July 3 and July 31, an international training march in the Mediterranean Sea, with 67 students of the "Mircea cel Bătrân" Naval Academy and 12 foreign students attending partner academies from Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Republic of Turkey and Spain. The cadets trained under the supervision of the instructors onboard the ship, the purpose of the training marches being to develop the specific skills of the future officers. During the training march, Training Ship "Mircea" crossed the Corinth Canal for the second time in its history.

During the 28 day-training march, the sailing ship docked in the Ports of Piraeus (Greece), Taranto (Italy) and Izmir (Turkey).

## PARTICIPATION OF “REGINA MARIA” FRIGATE IN NATO SEA GUARDIAN OPERATION

“Regina Maria” Frigate, with an IAR-330 Puma Naval helicopter and a special forces operators detachment onboard, participated, from September 8 to October 11, in the Mediterranean Sea, in NATO Operation SEA GUARDIAN, alongside its NATO partners. The 240 crew members traveled more than 5,000 nautical miles and carried out maritime space monitoring actions.

The Romanian Naval Forces frigate interrogated approximately 200 commercial ships transiting its NATO assigned area of responsibility, and the IAR-330 Puma Naval helicopter performed research and surveillance

flights and provided support to the boarding group during maritime interdiction missions.

During the mission, “Regina Maria” Frigate docked at Souda military Port in Crete, where the Romanian soldiers participated in a specific training module organized at the NMIOTC (NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre), as well as in the military Port of Alexandria, in Egypt, to restore combat capability.

This is the sixth participation of Romania in NATO Operation SEA GUARDIAN.

Operation Sea Guardian is NATO’s maritime security operation in the Mediterranean and performs three maritime security tasks: maritime security capacity building, support provided to maritime situational awareness and maritime counter-terrorism.

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IAR-330 PUMA Naval  
helicopter





**ROMANIA'S  
PARTICIPATION**  
in missions and operations  
outside the national territory





**R**omania, part of international alliances and organizations, has firmly committed to concentrate its forces and demonstrate its commitment and national solidarity by contributing to collective defence and maintaining a stable security climate.

In a contemporary world shaped by the redefinition of the global security borders, Romania contributes to the increase of national prestige by participating with troops in missions and operations outside the borders of the Romanian state, in the context of the volatile security environment, characterized by geopolitical unpredictability, and of the most complex and challenging period after the Second World War.

In this regard, Romania has maintained and respected its firm commitments in terms of strengthening the joint international response to numerous challenges, by contributing with forces and means of equipment to missions and operations led by NATO, the EU, the UN and coalitions.

The Joint Force Command (JFC) is the operative level command structure, directly subordinated to the Defence Staff, which in peacetime is intended for the planning and management/coordination of current operations and actions of the Romanian Armed Force's force structure. In case of armed aggression, upon the establishment of the state of siege, the declaration of mobilization or of the state of war, the JFC plans and leads the joint national defence operation.

One of the basic responsibilities of the JFC is to exercise operational command of units, small units and military personnel participating in missions and operations outside the national territory.

Romania contributes with military personnel to missions and operations outside the borders of the Romanian state in the following theaters of operations: Western Balkans, Bulgaria, Poland, as well as to individual missions.

In the new context created in the proximity of the national borders, the Romanian Armed Force has adapted to the new geopolitical situation caused by the enhanced instability generated by the conflict in Ukraine, once with the increased in inter-ethnic tensions in the Balkan region and the soldiers' withdrawal from Afghanistan with the subsequent consequences and the challenges that constantly arise.

As an ally and partner, Romania supported both NATO and EU efforts in the Western Balkans. Moreover, the solidarity and determination to implement and strengthen NATO's position on the eastern flank was highlighted at the same time with the deployment of the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP).



IAR 330 Puma  
MEDEVAC

Considering the security situation maintained within the same parameters of relative calm, Romania's contribution to the theaters of operations in the Western Balkans is a priority for supporting stability and security in this region.

The Romanian Armed Force participates in the theater of operations from the Western Balkans with personnel and structures in Kosovo, within NATO KFOR Operation, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina within EUFOR Althea Operation.

Romania's participation on the territory of Bulgaria was decided by the resolution of the Homeland Defence Supreme Council, in 2022, deploying a communications and IT detachment to the area of responsibility of Headquarters Multinational Division South East.

Romania's participation in EU and UN-led missions has also been adapted in accordance with international commitments.

Following the Warsaw Summit in 2016, the Alliance decided to ensure an enhanced allied presence on the eastern flank of the Alliance and to support the allied effort of strengthening its deterrence and defence posture. In this regard, Romania participates with personnel and equipment in the US-led Battle Group (BG POL), established in Poland.

The Air Defence Detachment in Poland contributes to the consolidation of security on NATO's eastern flank and is part of the deterrence measures taken at the Alliance level.

The complex security situation, the acute energy crisis, the food crisis as a result of the Ukraine's blockade by the Russian Federation, but also as a result of the sanctions imposed on the aggressor state, war migration – all these generated a response from Romania, a state neighboring the conflict, but also a NATO and the EU member state.

From April to July 2023, the Romanian Air Force took part in the NATO-led enhanced Air Policing (eAP) Mission, in the Baltic States, with a detachment of approximately 100 soldiers and four F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft.

The main objective of the air policing mission, carried out in the airspace of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, was to prevent the violation of allied airspace and to provide assistance to the military and civilian aircraft in emergency situations occurring during the flight.

The detachment symbolically bore the name “Carpathian Vipers” and was deployed to Lithuania, to Siauliai Air Base. The NATO-led Baltic enhanced Air Policing Mission, as part of the military surveillance of the Baltic States’ airspace, is conducted on the basis of a rotational system of tasks performed by the allied countries since 2004.

The NATO Standing Maritime Presence in the Black Sea, with the aim of deterring the current threat, is one of the main missions of the Romanian Naval Forces.

Romania is an active contributing state within the Standing NATO Maritime Group (SNMG), the NATO Mine Countermeasures Naval Group (SNMCMG) and Operation Guardian Sea (OSG). At the same time, Romania contributes to the European naval effort within Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI and Operation EUNAVFOR ATALANTA in different maritime areas around the globe.

Romania supports numerous other missions and operations led by the UN, the EU and coalitions with different goals, in theaters of operations and mission areas in Africa, Europe, the Middle East and other regions in Asia.

The missions and operations in which Romania participates with military personnel are an impressive effort both from the logistical and operational points of view, as well as from the perspective of the human resources that must be trained to the highest standards.



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In-flight refuelling of an F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft

.....  
HIMARS



.....  
Exercise SABER GUARDIAN 2023



# SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES COMMAND

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Romanian Special Operations Forces Command (SOFCOM) was established in March 2018, and stands for the structure that trains and generates the specialized quick reaction component at strategic level, with land, air and naval structures dedicated, trained and equipped for the execution of the special reconnaissance missions, military assistance and unconventional warfare as well as its complementary missions on Romanian territory and abroad, independently or together with the special forces of the coalitions and the alliances Romania is part of.

**T**he first specialized structure of such kind has been operational in our country since 2003, when the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces Battalion “Eagles” was created in Târgu Mureş under the ROU Land Forces administrative control (ADMINCON).

In 2009, SOF began rendering operational the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Regiment by embedding the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Battalion “Eagles”, the 60<sup>th</sup> Paratroopers Battalion “Băneasa-Otopeni” Buzău, and 498<sup>th</sup> Paratroopers Battalion “Smaranda Brăescu” Bacău.

After its establishment, the SOFCOM took the 164<sup>th</sup> Naval Special Operations Forces Squadron (elite SOF unit of the Romanian Navy which was established in April 2006, in Constanta) under its OPCOM.

The ROU SOF School was established in June 2018, in Vlădeni, Braşov. Thus, the Romanian Armed Forces implemented a project to organize and conduct a Special Forces qualification course on the Romanian territory, similar to the initial training one required to join the US “green berets”.

## **CURRENT STRUCTURE OF THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES COMMAND**

SOF team members work closely together and rely on each other for long periods of

time, both during deployments and within the garrison. Due to this fact, they develop close relationships and personal ties which foster team cohesion and esprit de corps which is rarely found elsewhere in the military.

SOF operators are trained to use all types of light and heavy weapons, such as assault rifles, pistols, machine guns and sniper systems. A SOF team trains to achieve high marksmanship skills in order to be able to use the organic weapons for the entire range of operations.

The main vehicle of the Romanian SOF teams is the HMMWV (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle), a lightweight, highly mobile, four-wheel-drive tactical vehicle that uses a common chassis to carry a wide variety of military equipment. It must perform on various types of terrain, from desert to jungle, for long periods of time, with minimal maintenance. It has to carry its cargo and occupants safely while dodging instruments of war-bullets, bombs and mines.

But as the HMMWV is getting obsolete, the ROU SOFCOM searched for alternatives. Next year, the SOF units in Romania will be equipped with brand new JLTVs (Joint Light Tactical Vehicles) produced by Oshkosh Defence, the global leader in the manufacturing and sustainment of military vehicles and mobility systems. This delivery represents a serious step forward in the process of modernization and equipping of



.....  
Navy SOF training

the ROU SOF, alongside other critical weapons and military systems that are being procured, as part of ongoing acquisition programs.

## THE 51<sup>ST</sup> SOF BATTALION “EAGLES”

The 1<sup>st</sup> SOF Bn “Vulturii”, nowadays 51<sup>st</sup> SOF Bn “Vulturi”, was established on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2003. The battalion became operational in late 2005, after having selected several batches of graduates. Members of the SOF battalion have benefitted from courses abroad, such as the US Army Special Forces Course, the Force Recon Course, as well as other courses. The US Army Special Forces also deployed several instructors who were stationed in Romania for periods of up to 6 months.

As a consequence of the Russian invasion in Ukraine, NATO decided to strengthen the Alliance Eastern flank, and part of this effort was focused on the Special Operations Forces/SOF activities. Romanian SOF were already committed to the process of strengthening their position as a regional SOF hub. Allies responded quickly and Portugal was one of the countries that agreed to rapidly deploy SOF elements to Romania in order to support Romania’s defence and deterrence posture.

A tactical Portuguese Army SOF element arrived in Romania in May 2022. Integration was quick and the Combined Romanian-Portuguese SOF detachment started a 4-month training stage intended to increase interoperability. Ranging from live firing individual weapons, tactical combat casualty care and communications up to airborne operations, the training process was demanding but very benefic to both teams.

The resolute Portuguese SOF commitment continued after the initial 4 month-period and the Army SOF deployed its fifth detachment at the beginning of September 2022.

## THE 52<sup>ND</sup> SOF BATTALION “BĂNEASA-OTOPENI”

Formerly known as 60<sup>th</sup> Paratroopers Battalion “Băneasa-Otopeni”, the unit was the main airborne force within the Romanian Land Forces, able to deploy, insert, fight, win and deploy on short notice. Its legacy began in 1941, being the first paratrooper battalion in the Romanian military and its combat power was proved during the heroic battles of World War II in Bucharest. The unit underwent a transformation process and became a SOF designed battalion in 2011.

Currently known as the 52<sup>nd</sup> Special Operations Battalion with its headquarters located in Buzau City, the unit participated in coalition-led combat and peace-keeping operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Iraq. The unit was exposed to a wide area of international engagements, conducting many Joint Combined Exchange Trainings (JCET) and exercises with the ‘*tip of the spear*’ counterparts from all over the world.

## THE 53<sup>RD</sup> COMMANDO BATTALION “SMARANDA BRĂESCU”

Formerly known as 498<sup>th</sup> Paratroopers Battalion, is the first paratrooper-commando unit in the Romanian Armed Forces. Established on 30<sup>th</sup> of November 1990 and located in Bacău, it was previously subordinated to the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. The battalion was part of the 4<sup>th</sup>

Paratroopers Brigade (HQ Bacau), which was disbanded in 2005 due to a reorganization program of the Romanian Land Forces. In 2011, the 498<sup>th</sup> Paratroopers Battalion was renamed 630<sup>th</sup> Paratroopers Battalion “Smaranda Brăescu” and subordinated to the 6<sup>th</sup> SOF Brigade.

In 2018, the unit’s name was changed to 53<sup>rd</sup> Commando Battalion “Smaranda Brăescu” and was directly subordinated to the Special Operations Forces Command.

The 53<sup>rd</sup> Commando Battalion capabilities and interoperability level are tested and increased during national, multinational exercises and deployments in different theaters of operations.

## THE 54<sup>TH</sup> SUPPORT BATTALION “HORIA CLOȘCA ȘI CRIȘAN”

The first Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) subordinated to the 6<sup>th</sup> SOF Brigade was established on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2011, in Târgu Mures. This unit was transformed into the 640<sup>th</sup> CSS Battalion two years later, and in 2015 received the honorary name “Horea, Cloșca și Crișan”. On September 1<sup>st</sup> 2018, the 640<sup>th</sup> CSS Battalion became the 54<sup>th</sup> Support Battalion (54<sup>th</sup> Support Battalion “HCC”), and was redesigned to perform combat support and combat service support missions for the ROU SOFCOM and its subordinate units.

The 54<sup>th</sup> Support Battalion “HCC” participated in several main training events during 2022: timely & multifunctional support for the ROU SOCC, paratrooper training, EOD exercises and several STXs & FTXs. The unit also provides 2<sup>nd</sup> line logistic support and performs acquisition processes on behalf of SOFCOM and its force structure, and performs baseline activities and current operations (BACO) at Târgu Mureș garrison level.

## THE 164<sup>TH</sup> NAVY SOF SQUADRON

The Naval Special Operations Forces Squadron, the Romanian equivalent of Navy SEAL, has its roots in a naval reconnaissance divers detachment belonging to 39<sup>th</sup> Diving Center subordinated to the ROU Naval Forces Staff, with its headquarters in Constanta Military Harbor, onboard of a Navy ship.

Due to the necessity of having a multi-tasking force, able to conduct special operation missions in all environments, especially in the maritime one, the



Special Operations cadets during initial training



Special Operations  
Maritime Group

structure underwent multiple evolutions and changes. In 2004, it became 1<sup>st</sup> Naval SOF Detachment, and in 2006, the unit increased in size was renamed the 1<sup>st</sup> Naval SOF Group, being a company-level structure with 3 SOF Detachments. The unit became fully operational in 2007 and was certified to conduct Maritime Patrol operations.

Starting with 2009, the unit has been constantly deployed to theatres of operations, both on land and at sea, onboard of ROU Naval Forces Frigates as a SOF capability and force multiplier.

In 2014, the unit became a Battalion with 3 Naval SOF Groups, and in 2017 it became the 164<sup>th</sup> Naval Special Operations Squadron, with a headquarters,

2 SOF Groups, a Combat Support Group that includes a Special Boat Group and a Combat Service Support unit to provide logistic assistance.

In 2018, after the establishment of Romanian Special Operations Forces Command, the 164<sup>th</sup> Naval Special Operations Squadron was placed under its operational command and started the relocation process to its own base, Mangalia, which ended in 2021.

In October 2021, 1<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Maritime Group, generated by 164<sup>th</sup> Naval SOF Squadron, was certified “Combat ready” to conduct direct actions, special reconnaissance missions and to provide military assistance, being able to deploy abroad under NATO OPCON, independently or together with the special forces of the coalitions and the alliances Romania is part of.

From 2006 to 2022, the unit has continuously developed, trained and equipped in order to achieve maritime SOF capabilities, having US SEALs advisors alongside.

The unit is constantly participating in national, multinational exercises and deployments to different theaters of operations demonstrating SOF capabilities, their intra and inter-agency interoperability, being a force multiplier for the conventional forces, especially at sea.

## SOF SCHOOL

The Romanian Joint Special Operations Forces Training School is designated to act as a dedicated structure that provides initial training and further development specialization for the personnel within the Romanian SOF community, through a various array of courses and training programs.

The school was established in the center of Romania on 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2018, within a challenging physical environment, being directly subordinated to the ROU SOFCOM. At the beginning of 2020, the school received the honorific name “BUREBISTA”, one of the bravest Romanian ancestors. In March 2021, the school was reorganized and placed under the subordination of the newly created Naval Special Operations Training Centre.

The training & education system is designed to create specialists characterized by maturity, the ability to take critical decisions under pressure, pragmatism,



flexible thinking and the ability to comprehend various cultures and human societies.

The courses and training programs endeavour to remain relevant and focus on the SOF units' needs. In this respect, JSOFTS employs quite a vast array of teaching techniques delivered by instructors with various backgrounds.

Throughout its short history, the school has been a crossroads for more than 800 SOF personnel and strives to continue supporting the Romanian SOF community in the years to follow.

## THE NAVAL SPECIAL OPERATIONS TRAINING CENTER

The Naval Special Operations Training Center has been established on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 and subordinated to the SOF School, with the purpose of providing training and expertise in maritime and riverine environments. The courses and programs initially offered by the training center were designed to fill the Maritime Operations training gap in the SOF School's curriculum, and have been constantly diversified with the aim of becoming a regional training hub for the Black Sea area MAR SOF.

Based on the SOF School's same core values and training & education system, the training center focuses on developing and continuously improving the skills and abilities of both the Special Operations Maritime operators and the maritime SOF support teams. The servicemen have their basic skills developed and are skilled in advanced combat diving operations, vessel boarding missions and Maritime Interdiction Operations.

With a young core of instructors, specialized in all areas of maritime SOF, the Naval Special Operations Training Center is the youngest organization of the ROU SOCOM in the Black Sea region that has this unique profile and possesses such capabilities.

**JUNCTION STRIKE 23 (JUST23) Exercise** was the largest military exercise of the Romanian Special Operations Forces and took place between 8-18 May in the Romanian Armed Forces' training facilities. More than 500 Romanian soldiers alongside 100 soldiers from allied countries such as Bulgaria, Poland, Portugal, Spain and United States of America, and approximately 100 land, air and naval technical means of equipment were engaged to simulate live combined training



Exercise JUNCTION STRIKE 2023

conditions, according to a fictitious scenario. The main purpose of this complex exercise was to certify three NATO capability targets: a Land Special Operations Task Group, a Maritime Special Operations Task Group and an Air Special Operations Task Unit (rotary wing).

This important multinational training activity aims at increasing interoperability among the participating structures, by planning and conducting joint missions and operations specific to the special operations forces and harmonizing work procedures in a multinational environment, as well as promoting regional security, especially in the area Black Sea area.

**Special Operations Forces' Exercise Balkan Spirit 2023 (B4)** is a ROU sponsored multinational SOF exercise, aiming at enhancing ROU SOF capabilities and the interoperability among the allied and partner nations participating in the exercise, such as Bulgaria and Greece.

The main purpose of the exercise was to practice SOF specific skills and TTPs in a multinational environment and achieve a higher interoperability level. The participating countries had a great opportunity to train their SOF operators and small units in dealing with threats that could jeopardize national and regional security.

# 80 years of excellence in providing CIS to the ROMANIAN ARMED FORCES

For over 150 years, from July 14<sup>th</sup> 1873, the Signal Branch served the Romanian Armed Forces actions like a true nervous system, ensuring fast and protected transmission of the information needed in order to support the missions during peace time, crisis and war, using the electromagnetic waves, from a simple soldier to the complexity of the strategic command posts, and further from individual weapon systems to ultra-technological weapon systems.

**T**hroughout the Romanian military history, the Signal Branch appeared as a necessity to create the communications system for the command posts of the armed force during the Independence War campaigns, as a battalion-level structure within the Engineer branch, evolving within the structure of the Romanian Armed Forces as a distinct specialty in the two World Wars. The branch was established in July 1942, when the Signal Command (division level military unit) and the Signal Military School were created in order to align the war efforts of the Romanian Armed Forces' during the Eastern and Western military campaigns.

The natural evolution of the Signal branch (currently called the Communications and Information Technology and Cybernetic Defence Branch) within the Romanian Armed Forces is closely related to the technological discoveries that imprint to the CIS domain a unique dynamics; the generations of CIS capabilities develop once at 2 years, fact that requires continuous adaptation of the structures, permanent financial investments and technical staff, able to learn and continuously further develop; the complexity is probably due to the central role of the CIS systems in the conduct of the current military operations: conducting the whole spectrum of CIS missions in all five operational domains (land, air, maritime, cyber and cosmic). Therefore, regardless the hierarchical level where they perform in the Romanian Armed Forces, the Signal structures provide interoperability between national and allied CIS systems through the Federated Mission Networking (FMN) principles.

Moreover, being able to operate complex, modern CIS capabilities that can adapt to the mission needs, which covers the propagation of the waveforms (radio, microwave, tropospheric, SATCOM, optical fibred, laser) into the electromagnetic spectrum, and are permanently being subject to the Cyber and Electromagnetic Activities over the operational CIS and networks infrastructures, the communications and information technology military units are always in the first line of the Romanian Armed Forces missions and provide the necessary CIS support and interconnection through the National Defence Network (NDN).



The main element of this network is The Permanent Military Communications Network (RTP), the main platform, where all the network elements of the NDN converge to provide the information exchange layered by security domains and user communities. Thus, RTP is the private communications network of the Romanian MoND, which provides national coverage and, if needed, has the possibility to expand to areas of Romanian military interest, this ensuring a bus-level connection capacity of over 1 Gbps, and of over 175 Mbps at the end user level. This bus-level connection capacity ensures the management of mission-based transportation services, obtained as a result of the extensive modernization program of the network between 2016 and 2021. Being a scalable network, organized in a resilient topology, and using military, government and commercial links for transportation through the additional use of network extension capabilities in the deployable environment, it ensures the timely provision of CIS services at all levels (strategic, operational and tactical). Being a predominantly IP network, as a result of the modernization process, RTP ensures the

development of the Protected Core Network (PCN) technology, thus facilitating the implementation of the military “cloud” concept at the organization level.

The other communications components of RMNC, in this case the radio component with integrated services, the satellite component, the tropospheric radio component, the TETRA DIMETRA radio network and the optical component, ensure the horizontal layering and resilience of the communications system, in order to enable the secure interconnection of military static and mission secret deployable networks needed for the provision of voice, data, video streaming, functional services and C2 programs with land, air, navy and special operation forces. Also, in network architectures, interoperability points with allied structures are ensured in order to achieve a proper cooperation.

With over of 20 years of experience in providing long distance communications services to national military structures deployed to the theatres of operations (NATO, EU/OSCE and UN-led missions) and in achieving interoperability with allied military structures through satellite and radio communications capabilities, we



Graduation Ceremony at the Communications, Information Technology and Cyber Defence Military School



consider that we are able to provide the users with the optimal technical solutions for information exchange requirements.

While implementing the digitization processes at organization level, the aggressive cyber environment, the unpredictable security context and the technological evolution impose a fundamental trend of federalization in military communications networks and services.

This requires the need to adapt the military CIS System, according to FMN principles, by achieving interoperability of “day zero” and “day one” within national users’ CIS systems and services, necessary to meet the information exchange requirements, by providing a FMN Spiral 3 specific baseline, as a standard element within static and deployable CIS networks and sharing the operational situation awareness to all armed forces.

By implementing the interoperability standards in the development process of national CIS capabilities, the affiliation of the Romanian Armed Forces to the FMN initiative, the existence on the national territory of a NATO CIS DCM type structure and the sustained work of all those who serve the field of communications, information technology and cyber defence, turns the CIS field into a modern MOS, with high readiness and deployability levels ready to face all challenges and requirements of the operational fields.

The adaptation of the CIS educational system in accordance with the current needs of the ROU MoND, the research in the communications and information technology branch, the permanent testing of technological solutions and the training of CIS structures within the national (CETATEA) and international (CWIX, Steadfast Cobalt, MILEX and Cyber-coalition) exercises enable the development CIS field.

Based on the lessons learned so far from the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, where drone systems and high-precision weapon systems

have been widely used, the efficiency of using flexible, resilient and mobile CIS systems capable of operating in multiple propagation environments and highly resistant to electronic warfare allow both command structures and operational forces to exert the command & control of action elements, have a better awareness of the operational situation and an effective coordination between the weapon systems (air-to-ground, air-to-air, ground-to-ground) and provision of logistic support. This way, the Romanian Armed Forces' CIS structures' effort focuses on maintaining the current CIS system operational, and on identifying, testing, validating and developing new CIS capabilities that can meet the short, medium and long-term requirements.

Among these requirements, we should emphasize the equipping with broadband mobile satellite communications links systems, critical CIS communications equipment, broadband radio systems with capabilities able to operate in ad-hoc networks, Wi-fi tactical radio communication systems to facilitate the mobility of forces and assets in the operational environment, tropospheric radio systems, TEMPEST deployable systems for mission networks, swarm drone for CIS application and anti-drone protection systems.

The “digital revolution” in the military field can be improved by exploring and developing future technologies such as 5G, AI and IOT capabilities in the military cloud, which are forward-looking projects that involve an extensive process of documentation, testing and validation of technical solutions.

In terms of the recognition of space as an environment for conducting military operations, since Romania does not have a spatial infrastructure, but only uses satellite services for missions, a national space program is being developed at the current moment at the level of the ROU MoD, through the Communications and Informatics Command. The latest MILSATCOM project is considered a complex and ambitious project for the Romanian security community, currently being developed by the ROU MoND.

The satellite procurement program was declared a country project in 2018.

The initiation of Romania's space program subscribes to the international efforts made in the space field, and can represent a major national contribution at Allied

level, aiming at becoming a security provider on NATO's Eastern flank.

The Space and Radio-Communications Agency was established on July 2021, and subordinated to the Communications and Information Technology Command. Its main goals were to develop the Romanian MILSATCOM program and provide satellite services to the Romanian Armed Forces, by procuring satellite capacities from commercial operators and providing SATCOM management of the links through ground Anchor Stations.

The Space and Radio-Communications Agency also includes a Space Weather Component and notices the National Military Command Center with respect to the appearance of disturbances in the ionosphere, which can decrease the precision of locations determined by Global Positioning Systems (GPS) used for navigation by ships, aircraft, and vehicles, impacts on satellites and creates HF radio wave disturbance.

The purpose of transforming the operational requirements into capabilities and the electromagnetic impulse into information should be the motto of the Signal personnel.

Always online!!!

## **PARTICIPATION OF THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STRUCTURES IN MULTINATIONAL EXERCISES**

**CETATEA 2023 EXERCISE.** All structures with responsibilities in the field of Communications, information technology and cyber defence from the Romanian Armed Forces participated in “Cetatea 2023” specialized technical Exercise, conducted over October 2-19.

The fictitious scenario of the exercise concerned a coalition-type military operation, in which the structures involved could test the capabilities and interoperability of the communication and information technology systems and services, in an international working environment, simultaneously with countering the effects of certain actions in the cyberspace. The MoND specialized staff trained, during the exercise, alongside Romanian specialists from the institutions of the national defence, public order and national security



Exercise Cetatea 2023

system, as well as with soldiers from Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Republic of Moldova, Poland and the USA. The coordinators of “Cetatea 2023” Exercise aimed at testing the specific technical systems used to conduct military actions, as well as the

interoperability with the technical systems of allied and partner countries participating in the exercise.

“Cetatea 2023” is organized annually, is the largest exercise in this field and is conducted in several places in Romania. This year’s edition also included two special events, “Industry Days” and the “Distinguished Visitors Day”, which took place on October 18 and 19 at the 48<sup>th</sup> Communications and Information Technology Base headquarters, in Bucharest. During these events, 20 commercial companies, specialized in the production of communication and information technology equipment, presented equipment of interest in the field and offered the soldiers the opportunity to observe the potential of the profile market.

The specific missions and tasks assigned to the Romanian Armed Forces structures functioning in the field of communications, information technology and cyber defence aimed at strengthening the action capacity at all levels, ensuring the protection and resilience of the military cybernetic infrastructure, as well as the management of the cybernetic security incidents.

The Romanian military concentrates its strategic efforts to enhance the defence capability at national level and within Allied framework, in order to effectively deter and counter all types of classic, asymmetric, hybrid or other threats by equipping the force structure with high-tech military equipment, compatible and interoperable with those existing in the other NATO and EU member states’ armed forces, to ensure both the fulfillment of deterrence and defence missions, as well as their viability over the next decades, through the level of efficiency and technological development.

**DACIAN LANCER EXERCISE.** Almost 900 soldiers and technical means participated in Exercise “DACIAN LANCER 2023” (DALA23), which took place over September 11–22, at the “Getica” Joint National Training Center in Cincu, Braşov County. The soldiers of the 300<sup>th</sup> Support Battalion and of the 45<sup>th</sup> Communications and Information Technology

Battalion were among the structures participating in the exercise in order to have their combat capability assessed. Following Exercise “DACIAN LANCER 2023”, the 300<sup>th</sup> Support Battalion and the 45<sup>th</sup> Communications and Information Technology Battalion obtained the re-certification of their combat readiness level, proving once again that they are able to fulfill their assigned tasks.

**CWIX 2023 Exercise.** A delegation of 90 soldiers represented Romania, over 1–23 June, in the NATO exercise organized to test the interoperability of C4ISR systems – Coalition Warrior Interoperability Exercise 2023 (CWIX 2023), conducted at the Joint Force Training Center from Bydgoszcz, Poland.

This annual multinational exercise was approved by the North Atlantic Council (NAC), led by the Military Committee (MC) and coordinated by the NATO Consultation, Command and Control Council (NC3B). The exercise aimed at improving the interoperability of the command and control systems of NATO member and partner countries, by testing them in a coalition scenario. CWIX helps consolidate the resilience and agility of information and communications operational systems, by ensuring that NATO’s allied and partner nations can effectively operate together in order to keep the alliance safe.

As in past years, a main focus area of the CWIX exercise was the Federated Mission Networking (FMN) environment, which provides for a decreased risk of operational information exchange among nations and confirms the capability of allies and partners to successfully federate networks.

Almost 2,000 military and civilian personnel, from 36 nations, participated in CWIX Exercise. The Romanian delegation, headed by the Chief of the Information Technology Agency, subordinated to the Cyber Defence Command, included specialists from the Land Forces Staff, the Naval Forces Staff, the Air Force Staff, Communications and Information Technology Directorate, Cyber Defence Command,

Communications and Information Technology Command, Joint Forces Command, Joint National Training Center, Armed Forces’ Geospatial Intelligence Agency, and the National Defence University. 406 deployable command and control systems were tested and more than 25,000 interoperability tests were performed during this exercise.

CWIX Exercise gives our soldiers the opportunity to assess the level of interoperability achieved by the command and control systems with the Allied and partner countries’ ones, but also contributes to the maturation of national defence capabilities, by training the personnel and experimenting new concepts and technologies.

CWIX is NATO’s main interoperability exercise and is designed to solve interoperability challenges by testing communications and IT systems, with focus on those that will be deployed within a NATO response force. It is also designed to stimulate innovation and improve the interoperability of people, processes and technology, commanders’ decision-making process by sharing information and providing a common operational picture. CWIX Exercise, alongside two other exercises – TIDE Sprint and TIDE Hackathon- offers the possibility to experts in the field to develop Communication and IT systems that ensure the interoperability of NATO systems.



# CYBER DEFENCE COMMAND

**N**ATO Summit Warsaw 2016 and the Away Day meeting of NATO's Cyber Defence Committee, Bucharest was the starting point and the opportunity for a Romanian cyber command.

The Cyber Defence Command was established after the creation of the legal framework and the decision taken to transform the Agency for Military Information Systems and Services.

The idea of bringing together the management of IT networks and services with cyber defence has proven to be very inspiring and successful, especially for the military field. The integration of these two areas at the level of a command contributed to the common understanding of the situation and to the generation of a coherent response to the cyber security events.

The Cyber Defence Command was established on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2018 and subordinated to the Chief of the Defence Staff.

The Cyber Defence Command actively participates in the missions accomplished by the Romanian Armed Forces. In this context, it has the role to plan, organize, control and conduct cyberspace operations, in order to support the networks' functional resilience and to generate effects in support of the joint forces within national and allied environments.

The Cyber Defence Command has two main subordinate units: Information Technology Agency and Cyber Defence Agency.

The Information Technology Agency develops, implements, integrates and manages the IT networks for the Romanian MoND. It offers services such as networking, infrastructure storage and data processing, communication and collaboration, IT&C application development, verification and validation. It also supports MoND's missions and activities and deployed networks for operations and exercises.

The Information Technology Agency enables users to access, store, process, transmit, and manipulate information within military networks.

Cyber Defence Agency provides cyber security within the MoND networks. It provides support to MoND users for the execution of their daily activities and missions, and strengthens the MoND ability to quickly and securely share information between our users and with



our allies and partners and to withstand and respond to cyber-attacks. It assures the resilience of the MoND networks by offering specialized services to prevent, detect, respond to and recover from cyber security incidents.

Cyber Defence Agency enhances the trustworthiness of MoND's ICT products, services and applications by





Exercise CyDEX

means of the cybersecurity verification and validation process and offers technical expertise to the process of designing and implementing new cyber security capabilities.

From the beginning, the Cyber Defence Command has set ambitious goals concerning its missions, operational capacity and its role in the digitalization of the MoND.

Also, the Cyber Defence Command represents the Ministry of National Defence in the Cyber Security Operational Council and actively contributed to the Draft Law on Cyber Security and Defence.

The Cyber Defence Command represents the Ministry of National Defence within the PESCO Project, Cyber Rapid Response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security (CRRTs), as well in co-chairing the council. The project started in 2018, with 6 participating member states: Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland and Romania.

The entire performance of the Cyber Defence Command has benefited from an open and wide collaboration with other national defence institutions that operate in the cyber defence field, both at national level and abroad, as well as with the US, NATO, and EU institutions. This collaboration with our allies was a real success in our joint exercises, such as Saber Guardian, Steadfast Cobalt, CyDEX, Amber Mist, Concordia, Locked Shields, Cyber Perseu, Noble Guardian, MilCERT, CyberMAN and Cyber Coalition.

## PATICIPATION IN NATIONAL EXERCISE CyDEX

A team of experts from the Ministry of National Defence, coordinated by the Cyber Defence Agency, participated, between October 17-19, in CyDEX – the largest national cyber security exercise – organized by

the Romanian Intelligence Service, through the National Cyberint Center.

The Ministry of National Defence participated in the 7th edition of the exercise and, as every year, through the Cyber Defence Agency, contributed to the development and coordination of the exercise for two of the six technical scenarios played, respectively one scenario of forensic analysis of an Android mobile phone and a Capture the Flag-type scenario.

The event brought together around 500 experts from over 80 institutions with functions in the cyber security field, from the public, private and academic environment. CyDEX is the only national cyber security exercise focused on the practical (hands-on) component.

During the exercise, six complex scenarios were simulated, and the participants carried out specific activities in order to solve cyber incidents with various degrees of difficulty – phishing, script, exploit, zero day-simulated attacks, simulated discreditation of an



Exercise CyDEX





.....  
Romanian servicemen during  
cyber-defence exercise

Android phone, the threatening of the cloud or of critical infrastructure.

The main goal of the CyDEx was to exercise defence capabilities in the field of cyber security against threats posed to the critical IT&C infrastructure.

The activity contributed to the acknowledgement of the level of preparation and technical expertise in the event of an incident that could seriously affect the cyberspace at national level. At the same time, the exercise helped to develop and strengthen the public-private partnership in order to develop a warning, alert and responsive effective mechanism to cyber incidents.

This year's edition was supported by the following institutional partners: the Ministry of National Defence (Cyber Defence Command), the Foreign Intelligence Service, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the National Directorate of Cyber Security, the Protection and Guard Service, the Special Telecommunications Service, the National Authority for Administration and Regulation in Communications and the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization, as well as by Bitsentinel, PaloAlto, Clico, Enevo, Eviden, Microsoft, Adobe, TrendMicro, as by partners from the private sector.

## The Cyber Defence Command focuses on the following objectives:

- ✓ Strengthening the cyber security culture at institutional level;
- ✓ Establishing, organizing and training cyber defence forces;
- ✓ Recruitment of the military personnel and opportunity career development for the leaders;
- ✓ Rendering operational the cyber defence technical capabilities;
- ✓ National and international partnerships in the field of defence and cyber security.

# MAJOR PROCUREMENT PROGRAMS – Top Priority of the Romanian Ministry of National Defence



Placed in a complex geopolitical position, Romania acknowledges the importance of an enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltic States and Poland, thus focusing on the consolidation of the Eastern flank of the Alliance.

Consequently, consolidation of our country's profile as regional provider of security and stability within NATO and EU stands for the main objective of the Ministry of National Defence.

**T**he Romanian Armed Forces participate in joint exercises and training programs with allied states and partners, increasing resources and troops allocated in support of NATO and EU operations and missions.

At the same time, Romania intensifies its efforts and measures to consolidate defence and security alongside its allies and partners by honoring its undertaken commitments. One of these commitments refers to the allocation of 2.5% of the GDP for defence expenditures starting 2023.

### **HIGH MOBILITY ARTILLERY ROCKET SYSTEMS (HIMARS) TO EQUIP THE ROMANIAN ARMED FORCES**

The acquisition of High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) is one of the main procurement programs for which on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the Law on the implementation of "Indirect fire support capability" related to the High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) was approved by the Parliament of Romania. The paper stipulates the granting of the Letter of Offer and Acceptance – type state contracts specific to the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Program with a view of

procuring 54 HIMARS launchers and their auxiliary equipment for three battalions: ammunition, C2 elements, sensors, logistic support, maintenance, cryptographic equipment, and personnel's training.

The choice to equip the Romanian Armed Forces with the HIMARS system derives from the need to have modern artillery equipment, able to contribute to strengthening the national defence capability and to increase interoperability with the allied forces, by having in place a reliable deterrence capability.

HIMARS is one of the most precise combat support systems tested and used in real missions by the US Army and Marine Corps. The HIMARS reliability rate and interoperability degree between the US and Allied forces reduce the final operational and maintenance costs.

The acquisition of HIMARS augments the essential ground defence capabilities meant to significantly contribute to NATO collective defence:

- ✓ increase reaction time;
- ✓ increase the depth of the hit;
- ✓ successfully tested in combat in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria;
- ✓ high-mobility and C130 transportable;
- ✓ top of the line in NATO reactive/self-propelled artillery, the MLRS' successor.

Up so far, the equipment for two HIMARS battalions has been delivered, the rest of it being scheduled for delivery in 2024.

### **PATRIOT HIGH SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SYSTEM – HSAM**

The main objective of Patriot High Surface-to-Air Missile procurement program is to supply the Romanian Air Forces with 7 HSAM systems that will improve air and anti-ballistic missile defence capabilities. The 3+ configuration acquired by Romania is the most modern type on the market in terms of the hardware and software configuration of the ground equipment as well as the missiles.

The Romanian Parliament approved in 2017 the Law 222/2017 regarding the Patriot systems' purchase. The total costs are \$3.9 billion USD without VAT.

Up to this moment, six Letters of Acceptance have been signed with the United States Government for the first batch of four Fire Units/FUs, ammunition and the associated services, with a total cost of 2,2 billion USD.

The main contractors of the package of equipment and services associated with the PATRIOT systems are the US Raytheon and Lockheed-Martin Companies.

The first PATRIOT High Surface-to-Air Missile system arrived in Romania in August, 2020. The acceptance tests were finalized in the second part of October, being followed by the training of personnel manning the 74th PATRIOT Regiment on the specific configuration delivered to Romania, as well as a collective training of the crews with a view of developing the operating and maintenance skills, and improving the techniques, tactics and procedures required to operate the system.

The following 3 FUs were delivered and the acceptance tests were planned to be performed until April, 2023.

In March, 2023, the Government sent Letter of Request for the Letter of Offer and Acceptance. The request is currently being assessed by the US Government.

### **“GROUND SURVEILLANCE RADAR – ALERT” AND “UNATTENDED GROUND SENSOR SYSTEM” PROCUREMENT PROGRAMS**

The wide range of threats caused the importance of surveillance missions to grow exponentially: protection



HIMARS

of troops, military equipment and facilities against intrusions of personnel and vehicles.

There are two on-going procurement programs run by the Land Forces:

- ✓ The “Ground Surveillance Radar – ALERT” –two of out of eight systems have already been delivered. The remaining systems will be procured based on the available funds. 21 million lei were paid for the first two systems.
- ✓ “Unattended Ground Sensor System – UGS” Program, which will detect people movement from a distance of at least 75 m, the wheeled vehicles’ displacement at a 250 m distance and the tracked vehicles’ movement at 350 m distance“. The first two systems were delivered in December, 2022. The Romanian Government has paid 13.2 million lei so far. The program stipulates the procurement for 8 such systems, whose total cost amounts to 41 million lei, of which 11.12 lei was paid in 2023.



## PROCUREMENT OF THE SECOND F-16 SQUADRON

The building of the air defence capability as part of the “Romanian Air Force Multirole Aircraft” Program, adopted by HDSC Decision no S – 70/2012, refers to the phased equipping of the Romanian Air Force with 48 aircraft. After analysis made by specialists in the field, the acquisition of a first lot of F-16 aircraft from Portugal was decided upon, this type of aircraft making the transition to fifth generation fighters easier.

Up to this date, the Romanian Air Force has been equipped with 17 F-16 aircrafts, which were transferred from the Portuguese Government, thus, making up the first multirole aircraft squadron, in accordance with the concept on “gradual building of air defence capabilities” in the “Multirole Air Force Aircraft” Program. At the same time, aircrafts from the 1<sup>st</sup> squadron will enter a

modernization process, reaching a configuration fitting the current NATO standards.

In order to continue the multirole aircraft procurement process and build Transition Operational Capabilities made up of 3 F-16 fighter squadrons, the Romanian Parliament has approved, in July 2022, a law for the purchase of 32 aircrafts from the Norwegian Government, with its related logistic support, personnel training and technical assistance. The contract for the purchase of the 32 F-16 aircrafts from Norway was signed at the beginning of November 2022, the program lasting for a three- year period.

In the same law, the Parliament approved the purchase of additional logistic support from the US Government for the 32 F-16s and their modernization to the same configurations possessed by the 1<sup>st</sup> squadron.

On November 29<sup>th</sup>, the first three F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft purchased by Romania from the Kingdom of Norway landed at the 86<sup>th</sup> “Lieutenant Aviator Gheorghe Mociorniță” Air Base, in Borcea. The acquisition of the new batch of F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft and the related package of goods and services will ensure the increase of Romania’s security through the execution of missions designated to defend the national/NATO airspace during peacetime and crisis situations, by the Permanent Air Police Combat Service under NATO command.

## UAS-TO CLASS II SYSTEM PROCUREMENT PROGRAM

Romanian Government approved in 2021, by Decision no. 912/2021, the specific competitive procedure for the acquisition of minimum 2 – maximum 7 Class II UAS Systems. In December 2022, the Romanian Government signed with Elbit System Ltd. Company the framework agreement for the delivery of 7 Class II UAS systems on a 5-year period. The first subsequent contract for the purchase of 3 systems was signed in June 2023. The total cost of the 7 systems amounts to 1,891.640.449 lei. The first subsequent contract amounts to 824,697,108 lei.

## MOBILE ELECTRONIC WARFARE SYSTEM

Electronic warfare systems are highly complex nowadays and can provide soldiers with electronic spectrum superiority in the areas of operations.

There are two on-going acquisition procedures for two electronic warfare systems: 2 LINX Electronic Warfare Systems for H/V/UHF Communications and 3 ARGUS Electronic Warfare Systems for V/UHF Communications.

### NAVAL STRIKE MISSILE COSTAL DEFENCE SYSTEM PROGRAM

The goal of the procurement program is to equip the Romanian Naval Forces' structures with 4 Naval Strike Missile Coastal Defence Systems and the related ammunition, support, testing, communications and training equipment, which contribute to the strengthening of the national defence capability and increase interoperability with the allied forces, by having a reliable deterrence capability in place on NATO's Eastern flank, at the Black Sea. The estimated value of the program amounts to 265,556,548 USD.

### “C4I SYSTEM WITH ISTAR CAPABILITIES” PROCUREMENT PROGRAM

The Government signed 3 amendments to the Technical Agreement with NATO Communications and Information Agency. The systems are scheduled to be delivered in 2024. The total cost of the procurement program for the two systems (a static one and a deployable one) amounts to 98,700,000 Euros.

### UAS BAYRAKTAR TB2 PROCUREMENT PROGRAM

Bayraktar TB2 is a Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE), Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle capable of conducting Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) and armed attack missions. The Government signed the acquisition contract of such 3 Bayraktar TB2 UAS systems for 321 million USD. So far, 96.3 million USD have



F-16 Fighting Falcon





been paid. The systems are scheduled to be delivered in July 2024, November 2024 and January 2025.

### PIRANHA V PROCUREMENT PROGRAM

Piranha V Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV) is the fifth generation variant of the Mowag Piranha family of vehicles. The framework agreement stipulates the delivery of 222 Piranha V IFVs as follows: 82 IFVs out of 94 were scheduled to be delivered in 2023, the rest of the vehicles being scheduled to be delivered starting from December 2023. The cost of the procurement program amounts to 838 million Euros, out of which 328 million Euros were already paid.

### MINE-HUNTER PROCUREMENT PROGRAM

The Government of Romania signed with the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain the contract for the delivery of two mine-hunters. The contract also stipulates the provision of initial logistic support, necessary modernization works, as well as autonomous reconnaissance and mine clearance systems. The governments signed the Transfer Certificate of the Property Title for the first ship. The cost of the program amounts to 150 million Euros, out of which 36.5 million Euros have already been paid.

# IMPORTANCE of HUMAN INTELLIGENCE (HUMINT) in the Context of War

HUMINT has played a pivotal role in various historical conflicts, contributing from strategic to tactical decision-making and influencing outcomes. Nowadays, part of a larger collection spectrum that includes multiple sorts of technical sensors, HUMINT represents the intelligence derived from information provided by, or collected on human sources and individuals of intelligence interest.

**H**UMINT has played a pivotal role in various historical conflicts, contributing from strategic to tactical decision-making and influencing outcomes. Nowadays, part of a larger collection spectrum that includes multiple sorts of technical sensors, HUMINT represents the intelligence derived from information provided by, or collected on human sources and individuals of intelligence interest.

Thinking of HUMINT as a sensor, the main difference from the technical sensors' capabilities is that the HUMINT sensor is not material. It rather consists exclusively of human direct or indirect interaction and human beings' behavior exploitation, in a world of subjective deduction – regardless of the means of communication. The information collected is usually the result of a chain of interactions and human interpretations, being influenced by cultural and environmental factors.

These aspects emphasize the importance of both personal traits and skills – along with the professional preparation of the HUMINT personnel, and the profile and coverage of the human sources. This also gives HUMINT a critical position in specific operations and hybrid warfare, where understanding the “human dimension” is essential to achieve precise targeting, intended effects, and operational success.

## OPERATIONAL ADVANTAGES OF HUMINT IN WAR

HUMINT is often the sole source of information that allows the discovery of threat networks, key personnel, roles, morale, and operational intentions, also obtaining access to physically denied areas for an inside view of buildings and other critical infrastructure, or supporting measure of effectiveness in no-go areas. Its outcome, achieved through either observation or direct communication with people, includes answering the main intelligence questions of *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how*, while providing the context and narrative of events.

In the modern times, HUMINT was remodeled by the counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy, with a large number of practical successes (and failures) in Iraq and Afghanistan, COIN combines and harmonizes the PMESII elements to bolster the legitimacy and efficiency of the government while diminishing insurgent influence over the populace. Thus, HUMINT activities have ranged from engagement with local leaders and other human sources for intelligence gathering to support the activity of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, or identifying adversary networks and supporting the targeting of high-value insurgents.

HUMINT's prevalence in COIN stemmed from its unique ability to decode the intricate human dynamics driving insurgent movements, enabling actionable intelligence through personal interactions.



On the other hand, the establishment of rapport and trust with local communities and flexibility to adapt to dynamic situations required from HUMINT straight leadership skills and sophisticated tradecraft, doubled by cultural sensitiveness. The information function (Figure 1) comprises intelligence (required to gain understanding, facilitating the whole influence operations spectrum), while actionable intelligence relies mostly on HUMINT. HUMINT's role in fostering trust within local communities granted counterinsurgents a strategic edge, as operatives gained firsthand insights, identified key figures, and anticipated insurgent actions.

The conflict in Ukraine brings new dimensions to the use of HUMINT, both from the perspective of lessons learned from war, and NATO's preemptive security measures. The situation in Ukraine highlighted the evolving nature of warfare, with a significant emphasis

on hybrid tactics that blend conventional military operations with information warfare, cyber-attacks, and subversive activities. In this context, HUMINT became crucial in unraveling the complex web of actors involved, ranging from regular military forces to irregular paramilitary groups and from civilian informants to saboteurs and diversionists. Gathering insights through personal interactions in the occupied or liberated areas enabled the identification of hidden affiliations and intentions, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the conflict landscape and providing real-time and accurate intelligence.

HUMINT operators embedded within resident communities affected by conflict in occupied areas were able to swiftly report actionable intelligence on movements, troop deployments, and changing allegiances. The proximity to the conflict zone allowed

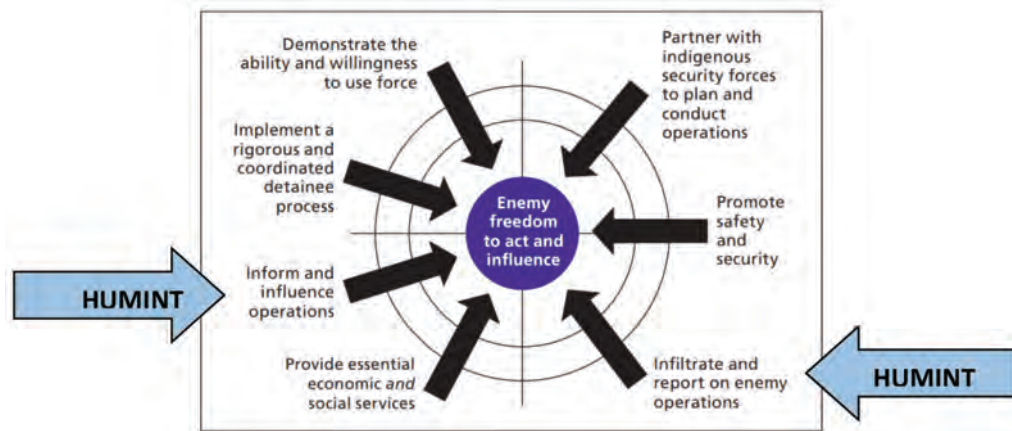


Figure 1. Key Elements of COIN Strategy – HUMINT contribution (apud RAND, Conducting Counterinsurgency Operations Lessons from Iraq (2003–2006), Research Brief, p. 2.

for the rapid dissemination of critical information to decision-makers, aiding in the formulation of responsive strategies. HUMINT’s timeliness proved essential in countering the adversary’s attempts at deception and maintaining situational awareness.

The conflict in Ukraine reinforced the effectiveness of targeted HUMINT operations in achieving precision outcomes. Operatives equipped with intimate knowledge of the local terrain and population were able to identify and target high-value individuals or key operational nodes within pro-Russian networks, as well as the location of military key assets and intentions of local commanders. Associated with the debriefing of displaced persons, or cross-cueing with other sensors (IMAGERY, SIGINT, OSINT), this allowed for surgical strikes and the disruption of adversary activities while minimizing collateral damage.

Moreover, the Ukrainian authorities facilitated the transformation of the population into a “sensor”, by using a function of the Дія/Diia (“Action”) official application, the “e-enemy” chatbot, for reporting (including geo-tagged imagery) about the enemy’s activities. This is a paraphrase of “every soldier is a sensor” used in Force Collection Activities, part of the HUMINT framework activities spectrum. But the approach also resembles a crowd-sourced reporting “hotline”, having behind management and analytical teams involved in the processing and validating of the information received.

Above everything, it is clear that early warning, liaison, and real-time intelligence sharing with bilateral

partners assist Ukraine’s defensive posture and response to the invasion. All these efforts have great relevance for the whole conflict management. If early warning, declassification, and publicity of intelligence (with the implication of media organizations) seized the initiative from Russian pre-emptive attempts at deception and fabrication, refuting and discrediting such efforts and aligned public opinion and governmental position (to include further assistance and support) in favor of Ukraine, they will also echo in the aftermaths of the conflict, supporting the overall recovery of the country, and the pursuit and trial of those responsible for war crimes.

Arbitrary detention of civilians, interrogation and torture of civilians and military prisoners of war (POWs), or other abuses and crimes have been documented at an impressive scale in the account of Russian elements, in their efforts to extract information from the captured persons; the Ukrainian side was also considered responsible for summary executions and mistreatment of POWs, especially at the points of capture, but not only. Anyway, Ukraine cooperates with the UN and Red Cross international bodies involved in the detention conditions control. It shows the importance of reinforcing the aspects related to the lawful treatment of the civilian populace and the POWs in an area of conflict, but also to consolidate the interrogation tactics, techniques, and procedures in line with the existing best practice.

The necessary knowledge and skills for HUMINT in warfare are partially distinct from those required in crisis response operations, or COIN, first of all from

the perspective of the battle rhythm, operational coordination, and spectrum of applicable activities, different legal frameworks and status of the actors, adaptation of the tradecraft to mostly non-permissive environment, and other operational particularities. Cultural awareness remains a valid point, especially thinking of combined/ multinational operations, even though the governance and involvement of the international HUMINT elements on NATO soil are still debated. At the analytical level, the knowledge of the history, strategic culture, and thinking patterns of the opposing party remains essential in supporting decision-making. In this respect, the current practice demonstrates the importance of academic outreach and sound adaptation to the ecosystem of the area of intelligence interest.

## CHALLENGES IN HUMINT COLLECTION

The multiple features of the HUMINT activity are permanently adapted to the current trends and foresight challenges posed by hybrid warfare, the cyber environment, the emergence of disruptive technologies, or the generic societal evolution. However, it should be clearly understood that HUMINT is a complex activity and its outcome cannot be generated overnight. Although some HUMINT operations are short in

duration, the whole tradecraft usually requires a long-term commitment, as well as extensive and meticulous development over the months or years to become effective.

The HUMINT activity is complex and entails inherent limitations and difficulties in all its stages – from operational management and interagency coordination to HUMINT collection and single-source analysis.

Operational security (OPSEC) measures are in place to protect both the operators (being it permissive or non-permissive operational environment) and their human sources. Further, the human sources are subject to evaluation from the perspective of their reliability but also on their allegiance, as they cannot only deceive the collectors but also endanger their security. Operatives can be subject to killing, capture, betrayal, physical harm, blackmailing, or threats to their comrades or relatives. Prevention of such undertakings is a major concern in any circumstance, and the psychological toll on HUMINTers cannot be underestimated.

The cognitive competencies of HUMINT operators and analysts are continually challenged by the multifaceted nature of human behavior and cultural intricacies. The ability to navigate these challenges, including adaptation to deception, is paramount to the success of HUMINT operations – especially in

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**INTERTECHNIZ**

the context of cognitive warfare. Operators must navigate through the complexities of motivations, emotions, and decision-making processes to extract accurate and actionable information, while analysts should work on proven models to generate predictive analysis. Operators must also possess the ability to comprehend and respect cultural norms, languages, and values to establish rapport and effectively gather information.

On the other hand, the evolving technological landscape requires quick adaptation and organizational resilience on the HUMINT side. The proliferation of technology has transformed the way information is exchanged and collected. HUMINT operators and analysts must adapt to emerging communication platforms, encryption methods, data analytics, social media analysis, identity intelligence processes, digital footprints, and artificial intelligence's superpowers to remain effective in a technologically driven world.

Moreover, HUMINTers must quickly learn how their activities fit into the broader operational pictures; they have to understand and make use of the combat support they can rely on, based on active and timely coordination and synchronization with other force elements.

All these aspects require continuous learning, skills development, and exercising.

## THE HUMINT ENTERPRISE IN NATO

In response to the war in Ukraine and the evolving security situation in Eastern Europe, NATO implemented a series of measures on its eastern flank to enhance deterrence, strengthen the defence posture of its member states, and ensure regional stability. These measures include enhanced Forward Presence, Readiness Action Plan, cyber defence development, intensified air and maritime patrols, cooperative security measures, political and diplomatic engagement, etc. and aim at addressing concerns arising from Russia's actions in Ukraine and its increased military activity in the region.

All these efforts were associated with the adaptation of doctrines and procedures and refocusing the education and training on collective defence scenarios (as an example, the interest shown to establish a NATO interrogation framework). NATO intensified its military exercises and training activities in the region as part of its efforts to enhance interoperability among member states and demonstrate a credible deterrent posture. These exercises include joint multinational drills and maneuvers, which not only improve the readiness of NATO forces but also showcase the Alliance's commitment to the collective defence of its eastern members. HUMINT is an integral part of these

scenarios, and specialized expert teams are involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of the relevant NATO standards.

NATO has an excellently developed Intelligence Enterprise, built on the NATO Command and NATO Force Structures (NCS/ NFS), and based on the Allied Nations' contribution, as Intelligence activities within NATO are typically carried out by member countries' intelligence agencies, which collaborate and share intelligence information as needed to support the alliance's objectives. Each member country maintains its intelligence agencies and capabilities, and they work together through various NATO mechanisms (such as the NATO Intelligence Committee (NIC) and the Military Intelligence Committee (MIC), responsible for coordinating intelligence-sharing efforts among member countries and ensuring that intelligence supports NATO's missions and activities. At the core of this, the NATO HUMINT Working Group (NHWG) is the specialized forum established to contribute to the continuous development of NATO HUMINT by learning from past experiences, addressing current challenges, and transforming the capability for

the future. Working in synchronization with NHWG, the NATO HUMINT Technology Working Group (NHTWG) has a recognized contribution to the development, testing, and validation of HUMINT software and systems in support of specific activities.

## **NATO HUMINT COE – THE HUMINT HUB OF THE NORTH-ATLANTIC ALLIANCE**

The enabler and catalyst of the HUMINT capability development in NATO, acting in concert with the relevant bodies in International Military Staff, SHAPE, or Allied Command Transformation, is the NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence (HCOE) from Oradea, Romania. It ensures the chairmanship and secretariat support for NHWG and NHTWG, being the spearhead of all initiatives for HUMINT capability development in NATO.

HCOE was officially established in 2010 to support NATO's strategic goals related to intelligence gathering, analysis, and dissemination, with a focus on HUMINT. Its mission revolves around improving the effectiveness and interoperability of HUMINT capability across the

Defence Minister's meeting with HCOE Commander



Alliance by facilitating collaboration, research, training, and the exchange of expertise.

Since its inception, HCOE gathered a critical mass of experienced professionals (not only from the sponsor nations – Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkiye, and the USA – but also from other supporting nations – Germany, Netherlands, United Kingdom, etc. – or NATO and national entities), able to provide high-quality expertise in the HUMINT field with the goal of transforming the NATO HUMINT Enterprise into a more interoperable and more capable vector in NATO missions and operations.

HCOE fosters a collaborative environment where Intelligence experts can share knowledge, experiences, and lessons learned in the field of HUMINT. By facilitating dialogue and cooperation, the Centre helps align practices and approaches to address common challenges. In this respect, the HCOE acts as an expertise hub contributing to a complete spectrum of activities related to HUMINT:

- ✓ The custodianship and maintenance of NATO HUMINT doctrine, standards, tactics, techniques, and procedures, and development of specific terminology. This ensures that member states operate based on a common set of principles and guidelines, leading to greater interoperability and cooperation.
- ✓ The development, experimentation, and validation of new theoretical and technical concepts, aligned

to emerging trends, fostering innovation, and answering operational shortfalls. HUMINT toolbox, human aspects in operations, HUMINT in online environment, HUMINT support to human network analysis and targeting, debriefing of migrants or refugees, artificial intelligence in support to HUMINT, a concept for resilient HUMINT organization – are just several subjects where the Centre's experts elaborated studies or conducted projects.

- ✓ HCOE is a NATO-accredited E&T facility, with a sound quality assurance system, based on the Allied standards, and following NATO's Global Programming approach. HCOE supports the HUMINT Education and Training (E&T) management in NATO (as HUMINT Department Head), and ensures the design and delivery of resident/ blended and online certified individual E&T solutions (or custom-made courses delivered by mobile teams) offered to NCS/ NFS and Allied Nations. The HUMINT courses are widely appreciated by the HCOE's customers, both in terms of subject coverage, quality of delivery, and support management, being subject to a sound and continuous improvement process based on the feedback collected, doctrinal changes, and lessons learned outputs.
- ✓ By conducting passive and active data collection and performing analysis of observations, lessons identified and best practices, maintaining NATO's

HUMINT represents the oldest and most elementary form of intelligence activity and will remain equally relevant, regardless of how “smart” and technology-related humanity becomes. The “unseen” and the “untold”, the intent, motivation, and decision-making, the feelings and genuine like (or dislike) will always stay with the humans; thus, in the information-gathering picture, HUMINT will always fill in the limitations of the technological collection means in a symbiotic association, but must always keep the pace with the world's multidimensional advance.

The enduring importance of HUMINT in modern conflict scenarios is emphasized by the war in Ukraine. This is teaching us important lessons about the dimensions of contemporary warfare, anchored in a mix of past and innovative tactics, techniques, and procedures that equally affect Intelligence collection and processing.

Nothing in HUMINT is to be forgotten, everything new is to be learned! At the end of the day, the art of HUMINT is limited only by human capacity and imagination.





Figure 2. HCOE Academic Partnership network

HUMINT lessons learned database, and leading the dedicated community of interest.

Academic Outreach is an important vector to connect HCOE to the academic and industry environment, to develop networking, enhance critical thinking, promote research, and contribute to both staff development and institutional resilience. Recognizing that a mutually beneficial and meaningful relationship with academic institutions (both military and civilian) facilitates an improved institutional performance and enhances the overall systemic processes, covering aspects of know-how and expertise exchange, scientific research, education and training support, or technical capabilities development, the Centre is already signatory party of a series of cooperation protocols with various institutions in Romania and abroad (figure 2).

Another important aspect of the Centre's activity is enhancing the human capital in HUMINT at the level of Alliance, contributing with various studies and projects that address this challenge. Human capital development is a critical endeavor that focuses on augmenting the skills, expertise, and professionalism of individuals engaged in intelligence management, collection, analysis, and technical support.

Education and training represent just one facet of development within this field. While comprehensive training programs provide HUMINT professionals with essential skills for their appointments, it is imperative that individuals in the intelligence sector chart their unique paths of continuous learning as part of lifelong professional and personal development. Human capital development also encompasses leadership and management abilities, cross-cultural competence and sensitivity, cognitive acumen, emotional intelligence, and technological proficiency, which include both digital literacy and adaptability to evolving tech trends. Not least among these considerations, HUMINT experts should also address the ethical and legal constraints inherent in intelligence gathering. Ensuring that HUMINT professionals possess a comprehensive understanding of the boundaries and ethical dilemmas they may confront is of utmost importance.

All the transformational needs of the HUMINT capability are clustered into the idea of developing an HCOE Research Hub, which will comprehensively address research, innovation projects, human capital enhancement, close-quarters combat requirements, adaptation to cognitive warfare, or the HUMINT organizational resilience.

# Army Sports Club

## “STEUA” BUCHAREST

Army Sports Club “Steaua” Bucharest is the most important sports club in Romania! It was founded on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1947, in order to continue in an institutionalized framework the old tradition of sports practiced in the Romanian Armed Forces. Throughout its 70 years of existence, the club’s athletes have always been the protagonists of national and international competitions, winning multiple medals at the Olympic Games, World and European Championships.

**T**he first sports unit of the club was football, which, after reorganizing the championship dispute system, was admitted to the first national division, as a result of some play offs. The same year (1947), other 7 sports units were established within the club: horse riding, fencing, field tennis, boxing, volleyball, athletics and shooting.

The foreman Florin MARINESCU scored the first goal in the unit’s football history, in the third stage of the national championship, during the game CFR Timisoara – AS Armata (final score 7-1).

Tennis player Gheorghe VIZIRU became Romanian Champion, winning the first title in the club’s history. Two other national champion titles were won in 1947 by horse riders Valentin FOTESCU, at horse training, and Mihai MĂINESCU, at horse obstacle race.

A year later, AS Armata became the Central Sports Club of the Romanian Military, and athlete Dumitru TĂLMACIU became the first military sportsman with a national record-breaking in the 3,000-meter race.

In 1961, the club was renamed, from the Central Army House into the Army Sports Club, also being called “STEUA” – nowadays famous worldwide.

On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1974, “Steaua” football stadium from Ghencea Complex was inaugurated with an audience of 30,000 people. The stadium was demolished in 2018 and replaced by an ultra-modern arena to be available to the public since 2020. In fact, many of the club’s units use Ghencea Sports Complex for their activities.



## SPORTS

**ATHLETICS** – The athletics unit was among the first sports units that appeared in the peak year 1947, which is also one of the most successful for the “red-blue” club. And it is enough to remember the name of Iolanda BALAȘ in order to have a clear image of the success of this unit over the years.

**BASKETBALL** – Although it appeared five years after the club’s foundation, in 1952, the basketball unit had a beautiful evolution just as any other CSA Steaua sports games, and the 24 national titles reflect the success of this Steaua unit.

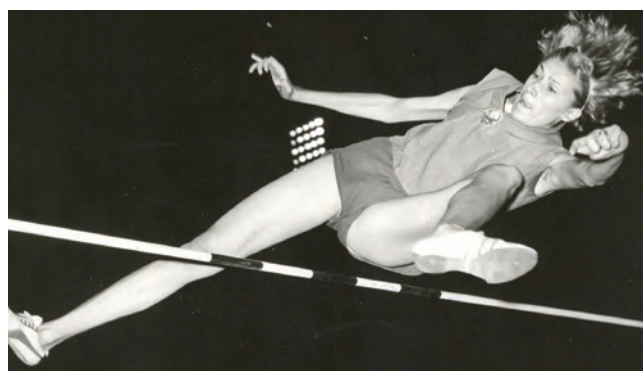
**BOXING** – Although in the post-World War II period professional boxing was still practiced, the influx of young people knocking at the gates of amateur boxing became overwhelming. It was a time when boxing became the most beloved sports after football. Being a combat sport, and at the same time a sport of courage, strength and skill, boxing was encouraged and practiced on a very large scale among the armed force. This is the reason why the boxing unit was, in 1947, among the first units set up at the same time with “Armata” Sports Association.

**ROWING** – The most prolific sports unit of Steaua Club – counting the most national and international medals and titles, most Olympic champions, as well as most world champions in its record – was established in 1949.

**FOOTBALL** – The very first unit of the club was the football unit, which, after reorganizing the championship dispute system, was admitted to the first national division, as a result of some play offs. The peak of this sport was reached on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1986, when CSA Steaua won the European Champions Cup.

**GYMNASTICS** – A sports discipline that implies not only talent, but also a lot of dedication and a conscientious, persevering training, gymnastics has always been one of the most representative sports units of Steaua Club.

**MEN’S HANDBALL** – It would not be an exaggeration to say that the history of Steaua Club’s handball unit represents the history of Romanian men’s handball itself. The four medals won at the Olympic Games and the seven at the World Championships gained by Steaua athletes with the national team speak about the



Romanian world champion at athletics, Iolanda Balaș



Steaua Bucharest rowing team



The European Champions Cup winning team from 1986



Romanian world champion at gymnastics, Sandra Izbașa



Romanian world champion at judo, Alina Dumitru



Romanian world champion at swimming, Camelia Potec



Steaua Bucharest rugby team



Romanian world champion at fencing, Ana Maria Brânză

value of this unit. In 1977, Steaua won the European Champions Cup, the most important trophy.

**JUDO** – The ascension of judo as an international combat sport as well as its increasingly widespread practice among the military were the reasons that led, in 1983, to the establishment of one of the “young” units of the club – the judo unit. The peak was reached in Beijing at the 2008 Olympic Games, when Alina DUMITRU won the gold medal.

**KAYAK AND CANOE** – Although the history of kayak and canoe unit didn’t start as “spicy” as the one of its “sister” – rowing. The evolution of the talented sailors or paddlers was spectacular over time and expressed in the highest level of performance that substantially enriched the club’s trophy showcase.

**WRESTLING** – The foundation of the wrestling unit in 1949 was natural and long awaited. Over the years, this unit’s athletes have won 12 Olympic medals, 45 world medals and 102 European medals!

**SWIMMING** – The unit was established in 1949, primarily due to the enthusiasm of a military swimmers group, led by Lieutenant Paul Tudor. The most important landmarks of this unit were a gold medal won by Camelia Potec at Athens, at the 2004 Olympic Games, 5 world medals and 45 European medals.

**RUGBY** – Like other units of the club, the rugby unit was founded in 1948, also due to the enthusiasm of some very talented sportsmen, including Nicolae Ghiondea, Mărgărit Blăgescu, Petre Cosmănescu, Șerban Megedinți, Emanuel Valeriu and many others, led by the first coach of the team – Gheorghe Sfetcu. The efforts of the players and the coach found their fulfillment quite quickly: only two years after the club foundation – and one year after the unit establishment – the team succeeded in winning the national champion title, at the end of a fierce dispute (which would be perpetuated over the years) with Locomotive (Grivița Rosie) and Dinamo. Afterwards, over the years, Steaua has won 37 national titles, at several age categories.

**FENCING** – One of the most representative units of the club, founded at the same time with AS Armata in 1947, is the fencing unit – with many past and present satisfactions. Three of the four gold medals won at the Olympic Games bear the signature of the star athletes: Ion Drâmbă, Laura Badea, Ana Maria Brânză, Simona

GHERMAN and Simona POP (the last three with the Romanian team at Rio 2016 OG).

**FIELD TENNIS** – The second unit established in the peak year 1947, after football, the field tennis one, had the satisfaction of bringing the first national champion in the club’s history, that very same year. Gheorghe Viziru’s victory over the famous Cristea Caralulis was also the first in his career, whose contribution to the impetuous development of tennis was undeniable.

**TABLE TENNIS** – The story of the table tennis unit came as a result of the many international achievements of this exciting and spectacular sport. Founded in July 2016, the table tennis unit was perhaps the most daring project, and the newly founded unit team has set out to achieve greater performances in time, both internally and in the major international competitions.

**SHOOTING** – It would be hard to conceive that the shooting unit of a military club would not be one of the most prestigious, given the particular selection criteria for the performance segment of this sport which supposes concentration, precision and self-control. The evolution and remarkable performances of the shooters representing Steaua Sports Club prove that this is the way things are.

## RECORDS

From 1947 till now, the “red-blue” athletes have made Steaua Bucharest the most important national sports club and one of the most powerful in Europe. The 105 Olympic medals, 705 world medals and over 1,300 European medals won by the athletes of Steaua club over the years stand as testimony.

Also, we can additionally mention the 146 medals won at Universiade and World University Championships, 384 medals at the CISM and Spartachiade Military Championships, and also over 13,500 national titles! At team level, the most important trophy was added on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1986, by the football team that won the European Champions Cup.

At Seville, the team trained by Emeric Ienei scored 2-0 with FC Barcelona, after extra time and penalty shoot-outs. That magical evening, Marius Lăcătuș and Gabi Balint scored from the spot marking 11 meters.

In the following year, Steaua had also won the European Super Cup, scoring 1-0 in the final match



Dinu Loredana, Simona Gherman, Simona Pop and Ana Maria Brânză Popescu – STEAUA Bucharest fencing team



Cătălin Preda at World Aquatics Championships – Fukuoka (Japan)



Medals won by the athletes of the Sports Club of the Army “Steaua” Bucharest

with Dynamo Kiev, in Monte Carlo, a goal scored by Gheorghe Hagi.

## NOTABLE RESULTS IN 2023

At 2023 World Rowing Championships in Belgrade, rowers of Steaua, Simona RADIȘ, Magdalena RUSU, Ioana VRÂNCEANU and Adriana ADAM won two world titles and a silver medal. Together with Ciprian TUDOSĂ, Florin ARTENI and Mugurel SEMCIUC contributed to other four gold medals and one bronze medal at European Championships.

Cătălin CHIRILĂ continued the excellent performance at the World Canoe’s competitions and won C1 men 500 m world title and C1 men 1,000 m silver medal.

Ilie SPRANCEAN and Oleg NUTA won Canoe 2-men 1000m bronze medal.

In 2023, the athletes of Steaua Bucuresti continued to achieve important results at world and continental competitions.



Cătălin Chirilă at 2023 World Rowing Championships in Belgrade



Simona Radiș and Ancuța Bodnar at 2023 World Rowing Championships in Belgrade

Alina Rotaru, at Budapest World Athletics Championship



.....  
Lăcrămioara Perijoc  
European champion  
at boxing



At the European Games in Krakow, Poland, Steaua's athletes won three gold, four silver and three bronze medals. Steaua's European champions are: Claudia BOBOCEA (athletics 1,500 m), Bernadette SZOCS (table tennis- women's single), three player-table tennis women team: Bernadette SZOCS, Eliza SAMARA and Andreea DRAGOMAN. Bianca GHELBER (hammer throw), Daniela STANCIU (high jump), Cătălin CHIRILĂ (canoe-500 m) and Lăcrămioara PERIJOC (boxing 54 kg) have won silver medals. Eliza SAMARA (table tennis-women's single), Bernadette SZOCS with Ovidiu

IONESCU (mixed double table tennis) and Mălina CĂLUGĂREANU (foil-fencing) have won bronze medals.

Alina ROTARU, one of Steaua's athlete achieved a sensational victory at the Budapest World Athletics Championships, winning the bronze medal in the long jump.

Cătălin PREDA won the silver medal at World Aquatics Championships - Fukuoka (Japan) 2023 at the 27 m high diving competition.

We can proudly say that Steaua has 16 athletes qualified for the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris.

*The Army Sports Club Steaua Bucharest does not focus only on performance. The club from the Ghencea Boulevard also values on the initiation programs and supports them by developing units where the future champions are being formed. Athletics, horse riding, football, gymnastics, swimming, fencing, field tennis and shooting are the sports every child is initiated in, guided and provided with all the conditions to become tomorrow's champion of the Steaua club.*

*The beginner training is initiated under the guidance of highly trained coaches, many of them former champions, at the club's bases in Bucharest - Ghencea Boulevard, Calea Plevnei and from the country - Săftica and Forban.*

# Invictus GAMES Düsseldorf 2023

## WE ARE A FAMILY, WE ARE STRONG, WE ARE INVICTUS

**A**fter years of recovery and fighting with the injuries caused by the accidents suffered in military actions, after more than twelve months of individual and joint training, the Romanian Armed Forces' team participated, for the fourth time, in the Invictus Games, a competition held over 9-16 September 2023, in Düsseldorf, Germany. Twenty wounded soldiers, classified with type 1, 2 and 3 degrees of disability or limited ability degree, most of them from the Romanian Land Forces, competed in eight sports disciplines, including seven individual disciplines and one team discipline, winning 14 medals -

4 gold ones, 5 silver ones and 5 bronze ones. They were joined by over 60 family members and friends, technical staff, coaches, media team and medical staff who joined forces to support and encourage, throughout the competition, our wounded comrades. The head of the Romanian Armed Forces' delegation to the Invictus Games was the Director of the Defence Staff, Lieutenant General Corneliu Postu. Just like last year, he accompanied the team throughout the entire competition.

The grand opening ceremony of the sixth edition of the Invictus Games took place at the Spiel Arena





in Düsseldorf, in the presence of the founder of the Invictus Games, Prince Harry of Wales of Great Britain.

For a few minutes, over 500 competitors from 20 countries and thousands of spectators focused their attention on Romania, when, with pride and honor, on Spiel Arena stage, the team captain, Master Sergeant (retired) Florin Boc, carried the national flag, alongside his teammates. Each nation was thus presented before the bystanders.

Valentin Popa, Special Operations Forces operator is one of the examples that perfectly fits in the “Invictus” phrase.

The Invictus Games Düsseldorf 2023 started on the athletic field, where Popa Valentin, encouraged by his colleagues from the Romanian team and family members, but also by the other nations’ participants, overcame his fears and limits and brought the Invictus Spirit into the hearts of all present.

Following the accident he suffered on September 21, 2017, during a fast rope helicopter insertion procedure conducted on a moving ship, in a national military exercise, he was diagnosed with quadriplegia (ASIA B) and classified within type-1 degree of disability. He has been in a wheelchair for 7 years, can’t feel anything from the waist down and can’t move his hands and feet. He is constantly dependent on his wife, parents and friends.

He doesn’t want to give up, which is why he practices sports every day and tries to get involved in as many activities as possible in order to forget about his medical infirmities. Starting 2020, he enrolled in the Invictus Romania physical and mental recovery program through sports. He relearned to swim, a sport he used to be very good at since his primary occupation is a combat diver. This year he managed to represent the Romanian Armed Forces at the Invictus Games international competition, dedicated to wounded soldiers from around the world, and to achieve results that we are very proud of. At wheelchair athletics he scored 2<sup>nd</sup> place at 1500 m race, 3<sup>rd</sup> place at 100 m race and 9<sup>th</sup> place at 200 m race, while at swimming he scored 4<sup>th</sup> place at 50 m freestyle, 4<sup>th</sup> place at 50 m backstroke and 3<sup>rd</sup> place at 100 m freestyle.

We experienced intense emotions at all Invictus Games events, both the individual ones – archery, athletics, ergometer rowing, power-lifting, cycling, table



Command Sergeant Major (ret) Florin Vuță at handbike cycling race at “Invictus Games Dusseldorf 2023”



Master Sergeant Marius Taifas at discus throw, “Invictus Games Dusseldorf 2023”



Warrant Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> class Valentin Popa at wheelchair racing at “Invictus Games Dusseldorf 2023”



Staff Sergeant Gabriel Czifrak won the gold medal at 1 minute row distance race, at “Invictus Games Dusseldorf 2023”

tennis and swimming, as well as the team one – sitting volleyball, which turned the competition into a true display of friendship and respect.

At the Invictus Games, beyond the desire to get the first positions in the ranking, the participants support their injured comrades, regardless of the corner of the world they come from, because their fight has mutual goals, related to physical and mental recovery through sports, following the injuries suffered in military actions. The Invictus Spirit transcends any time or space barrier.

Our comrades proved their sports skills, fearlessness, but above all, their team spirit. They had remarkable results in the four editions of the Invictus Games they have participated in – Toronto 2017, Sydney 2018, The Hague 2022 and Dusseldorf 2023. Due to their strength in overcoming the difficulties they face and in moving forward despite their injuries, they won our hearts and earned our respect, empathy and full appreciation.

Prince Harry’s brilliant idea to establish the Invictus Games in 2014 and, two years later, the invitation of Romania to participate in the competition, changed the destinies of the injured Romanian soldiers. The Invictus Romania project has evolved ever since, thanks to the involvement and support of the entire Romanian society.

Invictus volunteers are building a real education project, by using sports and the bravery of wounded soldiers as an impetus to promote Romania’s national values.

## “THE ROMANIAN PEONY CUP” – THE FIRST INVICTUS ROMANIA EVENT DEDICATED TO OUR NATIONAL FLOWER

Starting 2022, the peony was declared the national flower of Romania. Romanian Peony Day, celebrated every year on May 15, is a special occasion to celebrate the beauty and cultural value of these flowers. The peony is considered one of the most representative flowers of Romania and is a symbol of elegance, nobility and refinement. To mark the national flower of Romania, the Invictus Volunteers organized on May 14, 2022, the first edition of the “Romanian Peony Cup” sports event, organized in the proximity of the Romanian Peony Reservation in the Comana Natural Park.

## “HALF MARATHON OF THE INVICTUS HEROES” – AN EVENT ABOUT HEROES, HONOR, RESPECT AND COURAGE DEDICATED TO THE HEROES’ DAY

The “Half Marathon of the Invictus Heroes “ is organized in Bistrița, around Heroes’ Day, in order to celebrate heroes through sports and to promote national values and respect for the country and the Romanian nation. The half marathon is a running competition open to the public of all ages, whether professionals or amateurs, military or civilian. The first edition took place on May 27, 2022 and brought together more than 550 runners from the country and abroad.

## “THE NATIONAL FLAG DAY” – SYMBOL OF ROMANIAN IDENTITY AND UNITY

The national flag enlivened the Romanians in the difficult moments of battle, but also of joy and, the wounded soldiers celebrated it every year, on June 26, in a unique way. In 2023, the injured Invictus soldiers honored the National Flag Day by climbing the National Heroes’ Cross on Mount Caraiman, where they displayed a 100-meter national flag. They were accompanied by almost 100 Invictus volunteers, both military and civilian, and representatives of the national defence, public order and national security system.

## “VETERANS’ RELAY RACE” – HOMAGE PAID TO THE COUNTRY’S HEROES ON ROMANIAN ARMED FORCES DAY

In its 10th edition, the Veterans Relay Race takes place each October and is a good opportunity to show our gratitude to those who have done their duty to the country, and it involves running three relays, on three different routes, named after the colors of the National Flag – blue, yellow, red.

From 50 sports enthusiasts, who ran in the first edition, in 2014, on a single route, 10 years later, over 1000 Invictus volunteers, both civilian and military personnel, bearers of the three relays, runners and cyclists, traveled almost 4,000 kilometers in 22 days, to symbolically honor of all the nation’s heroes. Common values, patriotism and love for sports managed to break down any barriers and to create a bridge between the soldiers and civilian society, between children and adults, between professional and amateur athletes, between PEOPLE.

## “ROYAL INVICTUS DUATHLON” – A TRIBUTE BROUGHT TO THE VETERANS FROM THE THEATERS OF OPERATIONS

In its fifth edition, the “Royal Invictus Duathlon” is an traditional event in the “royal city” of Curtea de Argeș, the first capital city of Wallachia and marks the “Day of the Veterans from the Theaters of Operations” –



Silver medal – the compound archery team made up by Corporal 3<sup>rd</sup> class Marcel Neagu, First Sergeant (ret) Florin Bolovan and Corporal 1<sup>st</sup> class Ioan Reman with the team coach; Master Sergeant Ionuț Claudiu Butoi in a wheelchair.

November 11, officially declared in 2014, in recognition of the merits of the Romanian military personnel who represented the country with honor during the execution of the missions in the theaters of operations.

Each year, hundreds of Romanians take part in this sports competition, thus, showing their appreciation for the veterans of the theatres of operations. The event is an echo of the Invictus spirit, of comradeship, volunteerism, is about the promotion of national values and the strength with which the servicemen wounded in theaters of operations stood up and fought on, with the help of sports.



Royal Invictus Duathlon

# ROMANIA – member country of CLIMS

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## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CLIMS

**T**he Comité de Liaison International des Organismes Militaires Sociaux (CLIMS) is an international organization whose aim is the organization, on reciprocal basis, of the holidays of the active, reserve, retired military and civilian personnel and war veterans from the member states' defence ministries.

At the initiative of the four founding countries (France, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands) the CLIMS members decided to conclude the Agreement of 22 April 1975. A Liaison Committee was created for this purpose, the signatory parties deciding to meet regularly to develop the projects they conduct and supervise for the benefit of their nations.

CLIMS consists of 12 member countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Spain, Hungary, Romania and Greece.

The importance of CLIMS resides in being not only a treaty written on paper, but in creating inter-personal relationships and cultural exchanges among the soldiers of the NATO member countries, thus contributing to a better reciprocal awareness of the spiritual and moral values of these nations.

Therefore, CLIMS has the following main objectives:

- ✓ Development of inter-personal relationships among the soldiers of the member countries, by organizing recreational and recovery activities;
- ✓ Formulation of common principles for the general management and internal running of international camps organized for the youth of the families benefitting from CLIMS program and development of these international camps;

## **ROMANIA – HOST COUNTRY FOR THREE CLIMS MEETINGS AND AN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CAMP**

- ✓ *Spring meeting in Bucharest (16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> April, 2007)*
- ✓ *Autumn meeting in Braşov (September 26<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, 2011)*
- ✓ *Autumn meeting in Sibiu (September 24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2018)*
- ✓ *International CLIMS Camp, Sibiu (July 29<sup>th</sup> – August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023).*



.....  
 Bucharest, capital city of Romania

- ✓ Potential implementation of other types of joint social projects for families and young people;
- ✓ Better mutual understanding of the procedures and operating methods of the social military organizations involved.

In October 2004, at the CLIMS autumn meeting in Balatonkenese, Hungary, an official delegation of the Romanian Armed Forces filed an application to join the organization. Thus, Romania became an “observer” country and a Romanian military delegation was invited to attend the autumn meeting of the Committee.

Throughout the period when Romania had the “observer” status, there were exchanges of military groups with Hungary and Poland. Also, eight out of the eleven members sent delegations of experts to our country to evaluate the locations and services that the Romanian Armed Forces made available to foreign partners.

As of 11 October 2005, following the unanimous vote of the eleven member countries, Romania became the

twelfth full member of the committee at the CLIMS Autumn Meeting which took place in Rynia, Poland.

In 2019, by the casting vote of the member countries, Mr. Colonel Cozmin MARINESCU took over the Presidency of the International Liaison Committee of the Social Military Organizations.

CLIMS organizes two meetings each year. During these meetings, bilateral sessions take place, each country having the opportunity to present its updated offers of holidays, recreation and recovery for the military personnel and their families. Also, cooperation principles are established in the field of holidays on a mutual basis.

## ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES IN ROMANIA

The Romanian Armed Forces provide foreign partners with recreation facilities in mountain resorts (Braşov – Cultural and Social Assistance Resort No. 1,



.....  
Braşov City,  
Transylvania

Sinaia – Work Capacity Recovery Center, Predeal – Military Compound and Sibiu – Cultural Resort and Social Assistance Resort No. 2), as well as on the Black Sea Coast, at Cap Aurora (in Agat, Rubin, Coral Hotels) and at Eforie Sud. Foreign partners can also visit the Romanian capital city. For this option, accommodation and meals are provided by the MoND “Haiducului” Military Compound.

The quality standards and services provided by our locations rise to the level required by the soldiers and the families of the foreign partners who spend their holidays in Romania.

## BUCHAREST

**Bucharest** is the capital and largest city of Romania, as well as its cultural, industrial, and financial centre. It is located in the southeast of the country, on the banks of Dâmboviţa River, at less than 60 km (37.3 mi) north of the Danube River and the Bulgarian border.

The city has a number of large facilities, educational institutions, cultural venues,

traditional ‘shopping arcades’ and recreational areas.

The city is administratively known as the “Municipality of Bucharest” and has the same administrative level as that of a national county, being further subdivided into six districts, each governed by a local mayor.

## MOUNTAIN SIDE

**Braşov** (German: *Kronstadt*; Hungarian: *Brassó*; Latin: *Corona*; Transylvanian Saxon: *Kruhnen*) is a city in Transylvania, Romania and the administrative centre of Braşov County.

Braşov is located in the central part of the country, at about 166 km (103 mi) north of Bucharest and 380 km (236 mi) far from the Black Sea. It is surrounded by the Southern Carpathians and is part of the historical region of Transylvania.

**Sinaia** is a town and a mountain resort in Prahova County, Romania. It is situated in the historical region of Muntenia. The town was named after the Sinaia Monastery in 1695, around

which it was built. The monastery, in turn, is named after the Biblical Mount Sinai. King Carol I of Romania also built his summer residence, Peleş Castle, in Sinaia in the late nineteenth century.

Sinaia is located at about 65 kilometres (40 miles) northwest of Ploieşti and 48 kilometres (30 miles) south of Braşov, in a mountainous area on the Prahova River Valley, just east of the Bucegi Mountains. The town's altitude varies between 767 to 860 metres (2,516 to 2,822 feet) above sea level.

The city is a popular destination for hiking and winter sports, especially downhill skiing. Among the tourist landmarks, the most important are Peleş Castle, Pelişor Castle, Sinaia Monastery, Sinaia Casino, Sinaia train station, and the Franz Joseph and Saint Anne Cliffs. Sinaia was also the summer residence of the Romanian composer George Enescu, who stayed at the Luminiiş Villa.

**Predeal** is a resort town in Transylvania region, in Braşov County. An important mountain resort, Predeal is located on the Prahova Valley and is surrounded by four mountain massifs: Postăvarul, Piatra Mare, Bucegi, and Baiului. The name is derived from the Slavic word “predel”, which means “border”, as here was the border crossing between Wallachia and Austria-Hungary before 1918. In the late years, the town has known a remarkable boom in construction, many well-off people from all over the country owing a mountain retreat in Predeal. Predeal is the highest town in Romania with an altitude varying between 1033 m–1110 m.

## THE BLACK SEA COAST

**Cap Aurora** is a small Romanian summer-time seaside resort in Mangalia Municipality, Constanţa County. It is located between the neighboring resorts of Jupiter and Venus, also within the municipality.

**Eforie Sud** is part of Eforie city, Constanţa County, Romania. It is geographically located on the west coast of the Black Sea. It is a holiday resort known for its therapeutic treatments. It was called “Carmen Sylva”, after the literary pseudonym of Queen Elisabeth of Romania between the two World Wars.



Peleş Castle, Sinaia



Predeal, Prahova Valley



Cap Aurora Resort, Mangalia Municipality



Eforie Sud, Constanţa Municipality

# ROMANIA – Explore the Carpathian Garden

## BUCHAREST



- Palace of Parliament – the largest civilian administrative building in the world, as well as the heaviest worldwide.
- People’s Salvation Cathedral – symbol of the Romanian people, dedicated to all national heroes, its altar was sanctified in the year of the celebration of the Centenary of the Great Union – 2018.
- The “Dimitrie Gusti” National Village Museum, the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant, the National Museum of Art of Romania, the National Museum of Romanian History, the “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History.
- The Old Princely Court – the residence of the rulers of Wallachia in the 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the Voivodal Palace and the St. Anton Church (the coronation church).
- “King Michael I” Park / Herăstrău – the largest landscaped park, Cișmigiu Gardens – the oldest public garden.

## ALBA COUNTY



- Alba-Iulia (county capital) – the Alba Carolina Citadel – the most important Vauban type fortification in Romania, the National Union Museum.
- The Fortified Church of Călnic and the Dacian Fortress of Căpâlna – UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
- Part of the Apuseni Natural Park with the Scărișoara Glacier – the largest underground glacier in Romania and the second largest in the world.
- Râmeț Monastery – one of the oldest religious monastic settlements in Transylvania.
- The Wine Road.

## ARAD COUNTY



- Arad (county capital – city of palaces) – the Administrative Palace, the Cultural Palace, the Arad Museum Complex, the Red Church, the “Saint Anthony of Padua” Roman Catholic Church, the new Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral, the Mureș Waterfront.
- The Moneasa Balneary Resort (the Pearl of the Apuseni Mountains) – mesothermal waters.
- The Hodoș-Bodrog Monastery (1177) – one of the oldest monastic institutions in Romania
- The Șoimoș Medieval Fortress – a scenic viewpoint overlooking the Mureș Valley.



- The Wine Road with the Miniș/Ghioroc Museum of Vine and Wine.
- Pitești (county capital – city of tulips) – the Argeș County Museum, “Saint George’s” Church, Saint Friday Church, Trivale Dendrologic Park.
- The Poenari Fortress – a favourite refuge for Vlad the Impaler (the inspiration for Dracula). To access the fortress one must climb 1,480 steps.
- Brătianu Manor – Florica Villa from Ștefănești – one of the most beautiful boyar domains in Romania.
- Curtea de Argeș – the first capital of Wallachia. Curtea de Argeș Monastery is a masterpiece of the Byzantine Romanian architecture.
- Transfăgărășan Highway – 152 km, known as the most spectacular mountain road in the world. It runs alongside the picturesque Lake Vidraru.

## ARGEȘ COUNTY



- Bacău (county capital) – “George Bacovia” Memorial House, the Princely Court where the “Saint Precista” Fortified Church is located, “Ion Borcea” Natural Sciences Museum Complex, “Iulian Antonescu” Museum Complex, the recreation island.
- Slănic Moldova Balneary Resort – Moldova’s Pearl.
- Târgu Ocna Balneary Resort, the deepest salt mine in Romania (240 m). Inside one can find the Church of St. Varvara – the only church in Europe made entirely of salt and the Salt Museum.
- The Manor of the famous Rosetti-Tescanu boyar family from Tescani – a section of the George Enescu National Museum. Here the composer George Enescu completed his lyrical masterpiece, the opera Oedipus.

## BACĂU COUNTY



- Oradea (county capital) – the Oradea Fortress – the best preserved Renaissance citadel of Central Europe, the Criș Country Museum, Union Square with the Black Eagle Palace – the emblem of Oradea.
- Baile Felix Balneary Resort – the largest spa resort in Romania, thermal waters.
- Part of the Apuseni Natural Park which contains the Bears’ Cave – one of the most beautiful in Romania.
- The Living Fire Glacier, Cetățile Ponorului Cave.
- Stâna de Vale Mountain Resort.

## BIHOR COUNTY



## BISTRIȚA-NĂSĂUD COUNTY

- Bistrița (county capital) – The Medieval Fortress from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Evangelical Church, the Coopers' Tower, the House of Guilds, the Church from the Crown, the Bistrița-Năsăud Museum Complex, Silver House.
- The Tihuța Pass – one of the most difficult road passes that offers spectacular scenery of the Rodnei, Suhard, Călimani and Bârgăului Mountains.
- Colibița and Sângeorz-Băi Resorts – known for the curative potential of natural factors.
- The “George Coșbuc” Memorial House and “Liviu Rebreanu” Memorial Museum.
- The “Saxon House” Museum (Livezile) – a Saxon house representative of the Saxon civilization in Northern Transylvania.



- Botoșani (county capital) – the Old Centre, the “Mihai Eminescu” Park, St. George Church, Uspenia Church, Popăuți Monastery, the “Grigore Antipa” Memorial House, the “Nicolae Iorga” Memorial House, “Ștefan Luchian” House Museum, the County Museum, “Saint Mary” Armenian Church.
- The Voivodes' Road (Rădeni-Baisa) – a historical route used by the Moldavian rulers to travel between Iași and Suceava.
- Vorona Monastery – the place where Patriarch Teoctist (1986-2007) entered at a young age into the monastic life.
- Dorohoi – the “George Enescu” Memorial Museum, the Princely Church Ensemble, the Museum of Natural Sciences, St Nicholas Church.

## BOTOȘANI COUNTY



- Brașov (county capital) – medieval city renowned for the Black Church, Piața Sfatului (the Council Square), Strada Sforii (Rope Street) – one of the narrowest in Eastern Europe, its bastions, the Brașov Fortress, the County Museum of History, the Brașov Opera House, the Ethnography Museum, St. Nicholas Church which hosts the first Romanian School and Șcheii Brașovului.
- Mountain resorts: Poiana Brașov and Predeal.
- Bran Castle – renowned for its association with Vlad III the Impaler (Dracula) and the Royal Family of Romania.
- Fortified Churches: Prejmer and Viscri – UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
- Medieval Fortresses: Rupea, Râșnov, Făgăraș, Feldioara.

## BRAȘOV COUNTY



## BRĂILA COUNTY



- Brăila (county capital) – the Old Town, “Archangels Michael and Gabriel” Church, the Public Clock, the Fluvial Railway Station, the “Carol I” Brăila Museum, the Kinetic Fountain, Brăila Fortress, the Danube Waterfront, Monument Park, the Public Garden, memorial houses.
- The Small Island of Brăila Natural Park – a miniature version of the Danube Delta.
- The Lacul Sărat Tourist Resort (Salty Lake) – it contains one of the most important salt deposits in Romania. Within St. Panteleimon Monastery one can find a wooden church, built in the Maramureș style, with a 24 meter high bell tower.

## BUZĂU COUNTY



- Buzău (county capital) – the Communal Palace, the Buzău Episcopal Complex, the “Nativity of the Mother of God” Church-Greci, Banului Church, the Buzău County Museum, Crâng Park.
- Vulcanii Noroioși, Berca (the Muddy Volcanoes) – a geological and botanical reservation extended on 62.5 ha, a lunar landscape with miniature craters.
- The prehistoric caves (Năeni) – in which traces of ash, bones, ceramic objects and cave drawings from the Neolithic were discovered. Sărata-Monteoru Resort – salty waters.
- The Wine Road.

## CĂLĂRAȘI COUNTY



- Călărași (county capital) – the Palace of the Prefecture, “Saint Nicholas” Orthodox Cathedral, the Lower Danube Museum, the Municipal Museum, the Zoo, the Water Tower, the Danube Waterfront, the Dumbrava Park, beaches on the Danube.
- Red Valley Lake (Mitreni) – water rich in salt, sulphides, sodium and sapropelic mud.
- Negoești Monastery Church and the Church of the Monastery of Plătărești – historical monuments of religious architecture, founded by the ruler Matei Basarab and his wife, Elina.
- Ciocănești Island, Haralambie Island and Șoimul Island Natural Reserves located along the Danube – picturesque landscapes.

## CARAȘ-SEVERIN COUNTY



- Reșița (county capital) – the Museum of Highland Banat, the Steam Locomotive Museum, the Cultural Palace, the “Ion Crișan” Zoo, the Kinetic Fountain.
- Bigăr Waterfall – known as one of the most beautiful waterfalls in the world.
- Băile Herculane Spa Resort – the Roman baths date back to 153 AD, some of them are still functional today.
- The Oravița-Anina railway – the oldest mountain railway in Southeastern Europe (1863), which crosses 14 tunnels and 10 viaducts.
- Rudăriei Valley – the place with the largest number of functional water mills in south-eastern Europe.

## CLUJ COUNTY



- Cluj-Napoca (county capital) – the National Museum of Transylvanian History, the Museum of Art, the Transylvanian Ethnographic Museum, the “Alexandru Borza” Botanical Gardens, St. Michael’s Roman Catholic Church, the Metropolitan Cathedral, Central Park, the “Matthias Corvinus” Memorial House.
- Turda salt Mine – one of the most impressive underground tourist attractions in the world.
- Turzii Gorge – spectacular karst landscape. The area is famous for rock climbing.
- Gherla (Armenopolis) – the baroque city of the Armenian community in the Middle Ages.
- Nicula Monastery – renowned school of iconography on glass.

## CONSTANȚA COUNTY



- Constanța (county capital) – the Black Sea Waterfront and the Casino, the Museum of National History and Archeology, Ovid Square with the statue of Ovid, the Natural Sciences Museum Complex.
- All resorts on the Romanian Black Sea Coast: Mamaia, Mamaia Nord – Năvodari, Mangalia, Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud, Costinești, Neptun, Olimp, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Techirghiol, Cap Aurora.
- Ancient cities founded by the Greeks – Histria, Tomis, Callatis and the Roman triumphal monument of Adamclisi – a representative monument of provincial Roman imperial art.
- The cave of Saint Apostle Andrew – considered the first place of worship in Romania, where it is said that the Apostle Andrew, the protector of Romania, lived for a while.
- Dervent Monastery – the oldest monastic settlement on the territory of Romania, with origins in the period when the region was first Christianized, known for the Curative Holy Crosses.

## COVASNA COUNTY

- Sfântu Gheorghe (county capital) – the fortress with the Fortified Reformed Church, the Szekely National Museum, the National Museum of the Eastern Carpathians, the “Saint George” Orthodox Church.
- Land of Manors – 160 manor houses and castles, many of which operate as guest houses or museums.
- Târgu Secuiesc – unique historical center in Central Europe due to the inner courtyard network that surrounds the central square of the city.
- Covasna Balneary Resort – mineral waters, mofettes.



## DÂMBOVIȚA COUNTY

- Târgoviște (county capital – the Fortress of 33 Voivodes) – the “Princely Court” National Museum Complex, the Metropolitan Church, Stelea Monastery, Chindia Park and the Metropolitan Park, the Zoological Garden.
- The Brâncovenesc Palace Ensemble in Potlogi – 1689, founded by Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu.
- Bucegi Natural Park – the Sphinx and Babele (the old women), Ialomița cave and Monastery, Bolboci Lake, Tătarului Gorges (stone formations that have developed apparent human forms due to wind erosion, located at an altitude of over 2200 meters).
- The Neagra Bison Reserve (Bucșani).
- Transbucegi or Babele Road (old women’s road) – picturesque road that winds through the mountains toward the Bucegi Plateau.



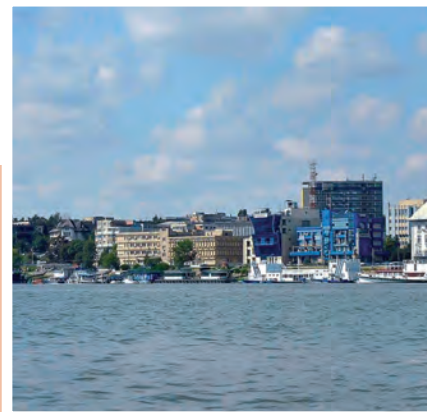
## DOLJ COUNTY

- Craiova (county capital) – the Old Centre, the Nicolae Romanescu Park, the Botanical Gardens, the Craiova Romanian Opera House, the Oltenia Museum – Ethnography Section – Băniei House, the Musical Fountain.
- Fortified houses (culă): Cernătești and Brabova – semi-fortified buildings specific for the 18th-19th centuries.
- „Amza Pellea” Memorial House (Băilești) – one of the most famous Romanian actors.
- Sadova Monastery – built at the beginning of the 16th century and fortified by Matei Basarab in 1640. In 1693 Constantin Brâncoveanu founded a monastic infirmary (a hospital beside a monastery).
- Wine-growing region.



## GALAȚI COUNTY

- Galați (county capital) – “Holy Precista” Fortified Church – the oldest historical monument, serving both as a place of worship and a defensive fortress, the “Răsvan Angheluță” Museum of Natural Sciences, the Navigation Palace, the Museum of Visual Art – the first Romanian contemporary art museum, the Danube waterfront, which is the longest promenade along the Danube.
- Lake Brateș – one of the largest lakes in Romania, with an area of 24 km<sup>2</sup>.
- Buciumeni Monastery – one of the oldest monastic settlements in the county, dating from the first half of the 15th century.



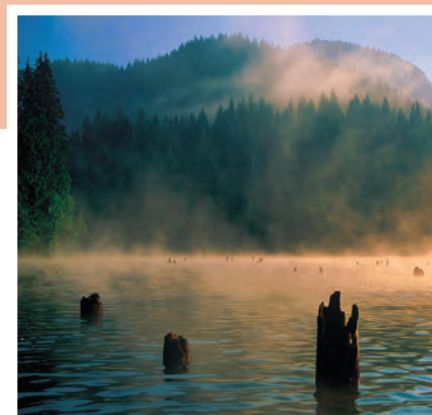
## GORJ COUNTY

- Târgu Jiu (county capital) – the Sculptural Ensemble of Constantin Brâncuși – which is a homage to the Romanian heroes of the First World War, the “Alexandru Ștefulescu” County Museum of History and Archeology, the “Holy Voivodes” Church, the “Holy Apostles Peter and Paul” Church.
- Polovragi Cave – according to legend, it is where Zalmoxis, the supreme god of the Dacians lived; Muierii Cave (The Woman’s Cave) – the first electrified cave in Romania.
- Fortified Houses: Curtișoara/Bumbești Jiu, Glogova, Cartiu.
- Novaci – a city located at the southern end of the Transalpin Highway (142 km), the tallest road in Romania.



## HARGHITA COUNTY

- Miercurea Ciuc (county capital) – the Franciscan Monastery of Șumuleu Ciuc – one of the most important pilgrimage sites for Székelys, the Mikó Fortress with the Székely Museum of Ciuc, the Palace of Justice.
- Lake St. Ana – the only lake in Central-Eastern Europe formed in the crater of an extinct volcano.
- The Red Lake Resort – scenic lake formed as a natural dam where you can see the traces of a sunken forest.
- The fortified church in Dârjiu – UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Băile Tușnad Balneary Resort (mineral waters, mofettes), tourist resorts: Borsec (mineral waters) and Praid (salt mine).



## HUNEDOARA COUNTY



- Deva (county capital) – the medieval fortress, the Museum of Dacian and Roman Civilization, the statue of Decebalus, the “Dormition of the Mother of God” Orthodox Church, the Gymnastics Champions’ Alley, the Musical Fountain.
- The Gold Museum in Brad – the largest collection of native gold pieces in Europe.
- Geoagiu-Băi Balneary Resort – mesothermal waters.
- Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa – capital of the Roman province of Dacia.
- The Dacian fortresses in the Orăștie Mountains: Sarmizegetusa Regia – the political and religious capital of the Dacian kingdom, Costești-Cetățuie, Costești-Blidaru, Piatra Roșie, Bănița (UNESCO World Heritage Sites).
- Corvin Castle – the most important gothic-style monument in Romania.

## IALOMIȚA COUNTY



- Slobozia (county Capital) – the National Museum of Agriculture – the only museum of its kind in Romania, the “Holy Voivodes” Monastery – the oldest monastic settlement in the Bărăgan Plain.
- Amara Balneary Resort – Amara Lake with salt water and sapropelic mud.
- Balaciu Monastery – built on the foundation of a former Geto-Dacian temple.
- “Piscul Crăsani” Archaeological Complex (Balaciu) – the first Neolithic settlement in Wallachia with a fortification system. On top of the ruins of the initial settlement the Geto-Dacian people erected a large urban establishment that had the Helis fortress as its centrepiece.

## IAȘI COUNTY



- Iași (county capital) – the Palace of Culture, the “Moldova” National Museum Complex, the Metropolitan Cathedral, the Three Holy Hierarchs Monastery, the “Anastasia Fătu” Botanical Garden, the Copou Park, the Great Synagogue – the oldest Jewish place of worship in Romania.
- Cuza Palace from Ruginoasa – the summer residence of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza.
- The Cucuteni Archaeological Reserve – this is where the first vestiges of the Cucuteni-Tripolia culture were discovered, which is one of the oldest civilizations in Europe (5,200-3,200 BC). Also, this is the site where a Geto-Dacia tumular necropolis dating from the 4th century BC was unearthed.
- The Wine Road and the Museum of Vine and Wine from Hârlău.

## ILFOV COUNTY

- Mogoșoaia Palace (Brâncovenesc style/Romanian Renaissance – 1702) – built by the Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu.
- Lake Snagov – recreation area. On the island one can find one of the first voivodal patronages in Wallachia, Snagov Monastery (1408).
- Căldărușani Monastery – one of the largest and oldest Orthodox monasteries in Wallachia, founded by the Prince Matei Basarab; Cernica Monastery – the monastic complex stretches on two of the islands of Cernica Lake.
- The second largest spa in Europe (Balotestți).



- Baia Mare (county capital) – Stephen’s Tower, the County Museum of History and Archeology, the County Museum of Ethnography and Folk Art, the “Victor Gorduza” County Museum of Mineralogy.
- Sighetu Marmăției – the Maramureș Village Museum, the Maramureș Ethnographic Museum, the Memorial of the Victims of Communism and of the Resistance, the Museum of Jewish Culture from Maramureș found in the Elie Wiesel Memorial House.
- The Merry Cemetery of Săpânța and the Săpânța-Peri Monastery – the tallest wooden church in the world.
- The Bârsana Monastery and the UNESCO Wooden Churches: Bârsana, Budești, Desești, Ieud, Plopiș, Poienile Izei, Rogoz, Șurdești.
- Borșa Mountain Resort – entrance gate to the Rodna Mountains National Park. The Horses’ Waterfall – the tallest waterfall in Romania (90 m) is situated nearby.

## MARAMUREȘ COUNTY



- Drobeta-Turnu Severin (county capital) – the ruins of the Roman settlement and Trajan’s Bridge – one of the greatest achievements of Roman engineering, the Iron Gate Region Museum, the Water Castle, the ruins of the Severin Medieval Fortress, the “Theodor Costescu” Cultural Palace.
- The Iron Gates Gorge on the Danube (the longest and most spectacular gorge in Europe) – the Big Boilers, the Small Boilers, Tabula Traiana, Mraconia Monastery, the rock sculpture of Decebalus – the tallest rock relief in Europe.
- The Ponoarele Karst Complex – God’s Bridge – one of the few natural formations of its kind in the world; the lilac forest – the largest botanical reservation of its kind in Romania.

## MEHEDIŢI COUNTY





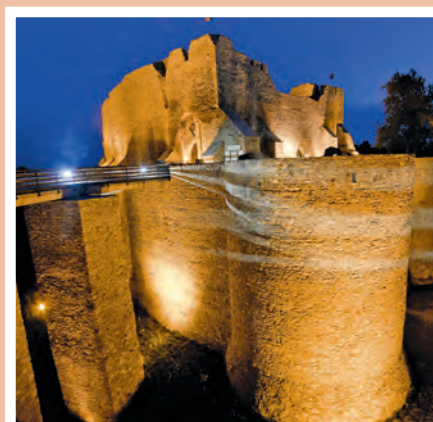
## MUREȘ COUNTY

- Târgu Mureș (county capital) – The Palace of Culture, the Roses' Square, the medieval fortress with the Reformed Church, the Toldalagi Baroque Palace, the Mureș the County Museum.
- Sighișoara – medieval citadel listed as an UNESCO World Heritage Site, the birthplace of Vlad III the Impaler (the historical inspiration for Dracula).
- Saschiz Fortified Church – UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Sovata Balneary Resort – Lake Ursu is one of the largest heliothermal salty lakes in Europe.
- The Defileul Mureșului Superior Natural Park with the Deda-Toplița Gorge.



## NEAMȚ COUNTY

- Piatra Neamț (county capital) – St. John the Baptist Church, Stephen The Great's Tower, the Princely Court, the Cucuteni Neolithic Art Museum, the Petrodava Dacian Fortress.
- The Neamț Medieval Fortress – part of the Moldovan fortifications' system.
- Mount Ceahlău – considered the holy mountain of the Romanian people, the site of an annual phenomenon unique in the world – the Shadow of the Pyramid.
- Monasteries: Agapia, Văratec, Pângărați, Neamț.
- The Vânători Neamț Natural Park – the only place in Europe where bison live in freedom, semi-freedom and on the reservation.



## OLT COUNTY

- Slatina (county capital) – Clocociov Monastery, the Olt County Museum, the Strehareț Hermitage, the Olt Bridge (1891) – the first metal bridge in Romania to cross a river.
- The Ancient Fortress of Sucidava (Corabia) – a Geto-Dacian settlement and later a Roman city.
- Caracal – the Princely Court – residence of the rulers Michael the Brave, Matei Basarab and Constantin Brâncoveanu, the Romanați Museum, the “Constantin Poroineanu” Park, the “Iancu Jianu” Memorial House.
- Brâncoveni Monastery – built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, restored and fortified later by Voivode Matei Basarab.
- The “Traian Zorzoliu” Boianului Plain Museum (Drăgănești Olt) – the Gumelnița archeopark.



## PRAHOVA COUNTY



- Ploiești (county capital – the city of black gold) – The National Petroleum Museum and the “Nicolae Simache” Clock Museum – unique in Romania, the “Hagi Prodan” Târgoveț House Museum, churches founded by Michael the Brave and Matei Basarab.
- Sinaia mountain resort – Peleş Castle – one of the most famous castles in Romania, the former residence of the kings of Romania.
- Bușteni Mountain Resort – The Heroes’ Cross on Caraiman (the tallest metal cross placed on a mountain peak – 2,291 m ) and the Cantacuzino Palace.
- Slanic Prahova Balneary Resort – Slanic saline is the largest in Europe and it boasts the cleanest air on the planet, the Salt Museum.
- The Wine Road.

## SATU MARE COUNTY



- Satu Mare (county capital) – the County Museum, the “Dormition of the Mother of God” Orthodox Cathedral, the Roman Catholic Cathedral, the Reformed Church “With Chains”, the Great Temple Synagogue, the Fire Tower.
- Károlyi Castle (Carei) – one of the most beautiful castles in Romania.
- The Oaş Country Museum (Negrești-Oaş) – with Dr. Mihai Pop Art Gallery and the Oșenesc Village Museum.
- Tășnad resort – thermal waters.
- The Wine Road

## SĂLAJ COUNTY



- Zalău (county capital) – The County Museum of History and Art, the Episcopal Cathedral, the Reformed Churches, the Transylvania Building.
- Porolissum – capital of the Roman province Dacia Porolissensis, one of the largest Roman archeological sites in Romania.
- The “Vasile Fati” Botanical Garden in Jibou.
- The Dragons’ Garden – a set of rock formations with bizarre shapes.
- Strâmba Monastery (Hida) – one of the oldest and most famous monasteries in the county, with the old Romanian school (among the first in the country).

## SIBIU COUNTY

- Sibiu (county capital – European Cultural Capital in 2007) – the ASTRA National Museum Complex, the Brukenthal National Museum, the Bridge of Lies, the Council Tower, the Evangelical Cathedral.
- Păltiniș mountain resort – the highest altitude mountain resort in Romania (1.442m) and the oldest (1894).
- Ocna Sibiului Balneary Resort (the Transylvanian seaside) – saline lakes.
- Mărginimea Sibiului – a pastoral area comprising 18 localities situated at the foot of the Cindrel and Lotru Mountains.
- UNESCO fortified churches: Biertan and Valea Viilor.



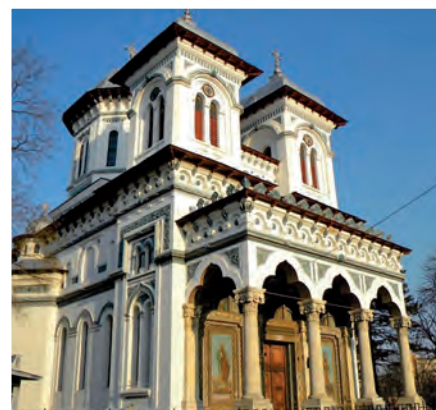
## SUCEAVA COUNTY

- Suceava (county capital) – the Seat Fortress of historical Moldova, Saint George Church (UNESCO World Heritage Site), the Bukovina Village Museum, the Bukovina Museum.
- Churches with outdoor frescoes, UNESCO World Heritage Sites – Arbore, Pătrăuți, Humor, Sucevița, Moldovița, Probota, Voroneț.
- The Vatra Dornei Balneary Resort (Bukovina's pearl) – mineral waters, thermal spas, mofettes, therapeutic mud, ski slopes.
- Ciocănești – the museum commune, traditional national motifs carved on the facades of houses.
- Transrău – a spectacular road that connects the Bistrita Valley with the Moldavian Valley.



## TELEORMAN COUNTY

- Alexandria (county capital) – the County Museum, St. Alexander's Cathedral, the marble pedestrian road.
- Memorial houses of important writers: Marin Preda at Silistea Gumești, Zaharia Stancu at Salcia and Gala Galaction at Didești.
- Coșoteni (Coșoteni / Vedea) Monastery – one of the oldest and most important churches in the county, founded by Matei Basarab on the site of an older church built by Negru Voda. This is where the first school in the county was opened.
- The Medieval Turnu Fortress (Turnu Măgurele) – part of the defensive system of Wallachia.
- Troianu Forest Nature Reserve – known for the Romanian peony.



## TIMIȘ COUNTY

- Timișoara (county capital) – European Cultural Capital in 2021 – the Banat National Museum, the Timișoara Museum of Art, the Banat Village Museum, Victory Square, Freedom Square, Union Square, Timișoara Fortress (Vauban type).
- Buziaș Balneary Resort (one of the most important in western Romania) – mineral waters, mofettes.
- Lugoj – the Iron Bridge, the Minorities’ Church, the “Dormition of the Mother of God” Church, the Museum of History and Ethnography.
- The Church of Miron’s Spring Monastery (the Voroneț of Banat) – the Cave of Românești, that hosts concerts and recitals of classical music, jazz, blues, rock or electronic music.
- Wine-growing area.



## TULCEA COUNTY

- Tulcea (county capital) – the Danube Delta Ecotourism Museum, North-Dobrogean Cultural Heritage Museum Complex, the Danube Waterfront, the Independence Monument.
- Ancient and medieval fortresses: Enisala, Aegyssus, Dinogetia, Halmyris, Noviodunum, Troesmis, Argamum.
- Măcin Mountains National Park – the oldest mountains in Romania.
- The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO World Heritage Site) – the second largest delta in Europe and the richest in biodiversity.
- The paleo-Christian Basilica of Niculițel (370 A.D.).



## VASLUI COUNTY

- Vaslui (county capital) – the “Beheading of John the Baptist” Church – founded by Stephen the Great, the Princely Court, the “Stephen the Great” County Museum, Copou Park.
- The equestrian statue of Stephen the Great – placed at the site of the important Battle of Vaslui (the battle of the High Bridge).
- „Emil Racoviță” Memorial House – a scientist and member of the Romanian Academy who set the foundations of biospeology.
- Bârlad – “The Dormition of the Mother of God” Royal Church, the “Vasile Pârvan” Museum.
- Huși (the town between the vineyards) – the Eparchial Museum, the Bishopric of Huși – with its church built by Stephen the Great, the “Dimitrie Cantemir”
- Memorial Museum, the Viticulture Museum – the first in the country.

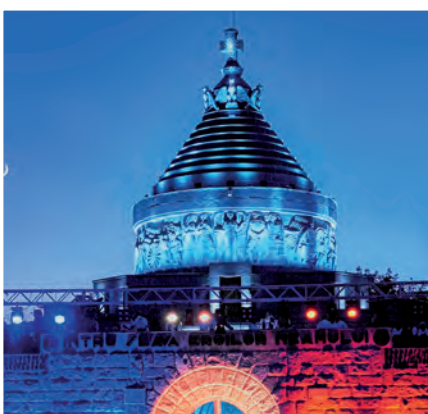


## VÂLCEA COUNTY



- Râmnicu Vâlcea (county capital) – the “Simian House” Art Museum, Zăvoi Park, the Vâlcean Village Museum (Bujoreni).
- Balneary resorts: Olănești and Călimănești-Căciulata Baths and Govora Baths.
- Historical monasteries: Hurezi (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Cozia, Govora, Bistrița, Arnota, Surpatele, One Wood Monastery.
- Horezu Resort – famous for its pottery tradition (UNESCO intangible cultural heritage).
- Cozia National Park, Buila-Vânturarița National Park.

## VRANCEA COUNTY



- Focșani (county capital) – the Vrancea Museum, the Union Monument – located on the old border between Moldova and Wallachia, the Landmark, the “Major Gheorghe Pastia” Popular Athenaeum, the Museum of the Union.
- Mausoleums of Mărășești, Mărăști, Soveja and Focșani.
- Soveja Resort (Vrancea’s Pearl) – mineral waters.
- Natural Reserve The Living Fire Natural Reserve (Andreiașu de Jos) – a natural phenomenon produced by the emanations of natural gas from the earth, which is ignited by the in the sun’s rays.
- The Wine Road.



# About ROMANIA

## ✓ LOCATION:

South-east Europe, in the north of Balkan Peninsula  
Geographic coordinates: 45° N, 25° E.

## ✓ ACCES:

Hungary (north-west), Ukraine (north and east),  
Republic of Moldova (east), Black Sea (south-east),  
Bulgaria (south), Serbia (south-west).

## ✓ TOTAL AREA:

238.391 km<sup>2</sup>

## ✓ THE LENGTH OF FRONTIERS:

3,149.9 km, of which 1085.5 land frontiers and  
2064.4 km river and maritime.

## ✓ POPULATION:

19.053.815 (2023)

## ✓ CAPITAL:

Bucharest, 1.716.983 inhabitants (2021)

## ✓ FORM OF GOVERNMENT:

Republic

## ✓ sOFFICIAL TIME:

Eastern European Time (GMT + 2). From the last  
Sunday of March (31<sup>st</sup>) to last Sunday of October (27<sup>th</sup>)  
is Romanian Summer Time (GMT + 3).

## ✓ LEGAL HOLIDAYS:

January 1, January 2 – New Year; January 24 – Day  
of the Union of the Romanian Principalities; April  
14 – Good Friday; April 16-17 – Orthodox Easter  
2023; May 1 – Labor Day; 1 of June, children's Day,  
June 4 (Sunday) – Pentecost, June 5 (Monday) – The  
second day of Pentecost; August 15 – Dormition of  
the Mother of God; November 30 – Saint Andrew;  
December 1 – Romania's National Day; December 25,  
December 26 – Christmas

## ✓ CLIMATE:

Continental

## ✓ LANDFORMS:

Romania presents a varied and proportionally  
balanced relief which includes: 35% mountains  
(Carpathians), 35% hills and plateaus  
(sub-Carpathians hills and plateau of Transylvania)  
and 30% plains: Romanian Plain (Câmpia Română)  
and West Plain (Câmpia de Vest).

## ✓ ELEVATION:

*Lowest Point:* Black Sea – 0 m;  
*Highest Point:* Moldoveanu Peak – 2,544 meters

## ✓ MEASUREMENT UNITS:

Metric system

## ✓ EMERGENCY CALL:

112

## ✓ EUROPEAN STATUTE:

Romania has been a member of the European  
Union since January 1, 2007. Also part of the UN,  
International Monetary Fund, European Council,  
NATO, UNESCO and has embassies and consulates in  
many countries.

## ✓ CURRENCY:

1 leu (abbreviation: RON) = 100 bani

## ✓ FLAG:

Three equal bands, vertical, in red, yellow and blue,  
with the blue band near the stick.

## ✓ NATIONAL DAY:

December 1<sup>st</sup>. Historical Significance: Unification Day  
of Romanians from Transylvania and Banat with the  
homeland, celebrated on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1918.

## ✓ CREDIT CARDS:

Major hotel and restaurants chains accept credit cards,  
including MasterCard, Visa, American Express and  
Dinner Club.

## ✓ CONSUMER PROTECTION:

National Consumer's Authority  
021-9551 | cabinet@anpc.ro | www.anpc.gov.ro

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