

Romania - U.S. Roadmap for Defense Cooperation captures defense modernization, Black Sea-area security

Minister of National Defense Nicolae Ciuca and U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper signed on Thursday at the Pentagon, Washington D.C., the 2020 - 2030 Roadmap for Defense Cooperation, with the Romanian defense leader speaking on the occasion about the Strategic Partnership of the two countries and about Romania supporting the U.S. rotational forces in the Black Sea region.

According to a release of the Ministry of National Defense, "the document advances the strategic priorities regarding the strengthening of cooperation in the Black Sea region, the continuous rotation of U.S. forces in Romania, strengthening cybersecurity and resilience efforts, and U.S. assistance for the achievement of allied capability targets and the modernization of military forces."

At the beginning of the meeting, Minister Ciuca conveyed on behalf of President Klaus Iohannis a message of speedy recovery and well wishes for President Donald Trump.

Our countries are enjoying an exceptional and enduring Strategic Partnership, built over time and in many missions in theaters of operations, where our troops fought together. The United States is our trusted partner and reliable ally, said the Defense Minister.

The two high officials also discussed the evolution of the Romania - U.S. Strategic Partnership in the military field and the prospects of intensifying defense cooperation through the opportunities provided by the implementation of the Roadmap, as key elements for ensuring the security of Romania and stability in the Black Sea region.

The meeting was also an excellent opportunity for an exchange of views on the main security changes in the regional and international environment, as well as to discuss concrete aspects related to cooperation with the U.S. from both a bilateral and allied perspective.

Romania strongly supports the rotation of the U.S. military in the Black Sea region. We understand that such a commitment requires us and the other allies to generate adequate capabilities, said Minister Ciuca, emphasizing that the intensification of the allied and bilateral exercise program carried out in Romania with the U.S. forces is part of the general goal of strengthening NATO's presence and visibility on the eastern flank. The Minister underlined the concern of the Romanian Army to improve the elements of military mobility, as prove the programs already started for the modernization of the infrastructure of the southeastern Mihail Kogalniceanu and central Campia Turzii military bases.

Another important topic discussed was Romania's contribution to efforts for the fair sharing of responsibilities on all dimensions - resource allocation, developed capabilities and participation in allied operations, missions and activities. Romania's commitment, as a responsible ally, to maintaining the allocation of 2 percent of GDP for Defense was also highlighted.

Bilateral cooperation on investment in equipment procurement strengthens the Strategic Partnership, the release states.

Just a few weeks ago we marked the delivery of the first PATRIOT system to Romania. We are now the first ally on the eastern flank to have such a modern long-range ground-to-air missile systems. The allocation of two percent of GDP for Defense starting with 2017 has conferred predictability to the Romanian Army's policy of endowing with modern combat equipment and has allowed us to start and support credible endowment programs, Minister

Ciucu said.

The U.S. Secretary of Defense said that the U.S. appreciates Romania's being a robust ally, and that the link between the two nations has become stronger over time, reiterating Romania's substantial commitment to the allied missile defense by hosting the Aegis Ashore system. Also, Mark T. Esper underlined that the U.S. remains firmly committed together with Romania in promoting peace, democracy and freedom.