

FORTIS IN UNUM

Multinational Corps South-East Magazine, October 2023



NATO
OTAN

Multinational Corps
South-East



Sibiu | Romania



MNC-SE - An Essential NATO Capability in the Black Sea Region"



MNC-SE - An Engine of Change within a Challenging Engagement Space



MNC-SE has a Critical and Historical Role in the Fulfillment of NATO's Core Tasks



Building a Successful Organization



MNC-SE: "The Talk of the Town"



HQ MNC-SE's' Fire Support Element

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To contact the HQ MNC-SE Magazine staff and/or to submit an article to be considered for publication in the next issue, please use the following contacts:

E-mail: hqmncse_pao@forter.ro

Postal Address: Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East, 2-4 Avrig Street, Postal Code 550027, Sibiu, Romania



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French soldier from the Romanian Battle Group with France as Framework Nation - ROU BG (FRA FN)

FORTIS IN UNUM Editorial Staff:

COL Constantin BĂLAN – Editorial Director

MAJ Alexandru RADU – Chief Editor

CWO Radu MUREȘAN – Assistant Editor

MASTER SGT Ovidiu SFÎRIAC (4th Infantry Division) – Assistant Editor

Civ. Oana ALEXANDRESCU – Assistant Editor & Photographer

“Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy
Publishing House:

Civ. Florin CUNȚAN – Photocopy Operator

Civ. Valentin BRAȘOVEANU – Bookbinder

Civ. Iulian CREȚU – Bookbinder





Multinational Corps South-East - An Essential NATO Capability in the Black Sea Region

General Daniel Petrescu

Romanian Chief of Defence

The geopolitical situation in South-Eastern part of Europe has always been complex. As a response to the unprovoked and unjustified armed aggression of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, NATO strengthened its collective defence and deterrence measures on the Alliance South-Eastern flank through a series of actions.

As a consequence, Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East had to accelerate its process to become fully operational capable by the end of 2023.

Beginning in February 2021, HQ MNC-SE was activated as a NATO Military Body and since then it enjoys the status of a integrated NATO headquarters within the NATO Force Structures with a mission to contributing to the deterrence of any hostile intentions against the Alliance and to provide the command and control of NATO's land operations in the assigned area of operation. The headquarters ensures an operational integration of the Allied forces, in support of strengthening the security architecture on the South-Eastern Flank of the North Atlantic Alliance.

Since the activation of MNC-SE, Romania as a framework nation has continually supported both operationally and logistically the implementation of this Headquarters through the capabilities available at the Land Forces Staff.

From the operational point of view, we have provided the MNC-SE with the required personnel by creating the proper venue for them to participate in the HQs activities. Similarly, we have designed and developed

a state-of-the-art headquarters, as well as the adjacent supporting infrastructure and high-end communication and information services.

Romania's commitment to develop a command and control capability on its territory increased country's relevance in a highly unstable regional and global security environment by consistently contributing to the Allied defence and control architecture.

We are a prominent actor in the Black Sea area, which provides stability and greatly contributes to preserving the strategic balance at regional, European, and Euro-Atlantic levels, with the whole spectrum of Allied organizations established on its national territory.

While sustaining the great work already done, we must continue improving our combat readiness in South-Eastern Europe to deter our adversaries. Romania and the Alliance will continue to invest in the infrastructure and capabilities of MNC-SE.

This ambitious organisation sets up the proper climate both for the Romanian military and the multinational personnel to reach higher levels of combat readiness and proficiency. MNC-SE is an essential NATO capability in the region for the Alliance.

Witnessing closely MNC-SE operational development from the very beginning, I am convinced that the HQ will reach the desired level of readiness in order to achieve the Full Operational Capability by the end of October 2023.

Multinational Corps South-East - An Engine of Change within a Challenging Engagement Space"

Major General Dragoş-Dumitru Iacob

Commander Multinational Corps South-East

Understanding the threats of the Russian Federation and their potential to evolve in the Black Sea region, Romania has constantly contributed with human resources and infrastructure to generate military commands and units as part of the NATO force structure: Multinational Division South-East – MND-SE (after the Wales Summit in 2014), Multinational Brigade South-East – MNBDE-SE (after the Warsaw Summit in 2016), and last but not least, Multinational Corps South-East – MNC-SE (after the Brussels Summit in 2018). Thus, MNC-SE is integrated, both horizontally and vertically, within the NATO security architecture in the Southern part of the Eastern Allied border. Our mission is to provide a consistent Command and Control capability for the NATO land forces deployed in the region encompassing Romania and Bulgaria.

The constant, fast-paced and continually changing geopolitical environment, led the HQ MNC-SE operational calendar to adjust the timetable so that it matched the FOC requirements a year in advance. This resulted in multiple challenges for our incredible staff that had to find the resources to meet these challenges. This was only possible through the synergy of the "iron triangle" elements: attitude, commitment and teamwork, altogether in one direction: the achievement of the Full Operational Capability.



Exercises in MNC-SE became routine, as training was at the core of our staff readiness status. This desiderate was achieved through a series of complex training events conducted across the NATO community and will culminate with our participation in STEADFAST JUPITER 2023. In order to validate and optimize the internal procedures, we've used the venue of DEFENDER EUROPE 2023, the perfect training opportunity for the Corps to demonstrate staff's proficiency in conducting planning and executing processes.

Another milestone in the short history of our Headquarters was the setup of the new command and



control (C2) architecture on the South-Eastern flank of the Alliance as of January 2023. Thus, MNC-SE is now playing a significant role in providing C2 for subordinate units, as well as being able to provide secure deployment and stationing of NATO forces in our Area of Operations.

The achievement of the FOC represents a starting point rather than the completion of a stage. This milestone will stand as a landing mark that will define the security and defence future developments for one of the hottest points right now on the Alliance map: the Black Sea region. With this achievement, HQ MNC-SE will benefit entirely by the resolve and trust of the most powerful military Alliance in the history to safeguard this region.

Romania's unwavering commitment as framework nation for our Headquarters, through a wide-ranging of component, joint, and support commands belonging to the Ministry of National Defence is truly commendable. Their constant assistance in the field of human resources, as well as CIS, logistics, or training and education, just to name a few, contributed decisively to the consolidation of MNC-SE's role within the NATO Force Structure.

Just as importantly, the constant endorsement and assistance of the "Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy greatly facilitated the integration of our HQ with the local community in Sibiu.

To conclude, I would like to highlight the work of our outstanding personnel coming from 17 member nations that defines our organization through commitment and expertise, the family of deployable or regional Corps in NATO that mentored us at every step of the way, and the community of the beautiful city of Sibiu, our "homebase" since 1 July 2021 and for many years to come.

"WeAreNATO, WeAreMNCSE"

Operational Level Warfighting and the Importance of Joint Air-Land Integration

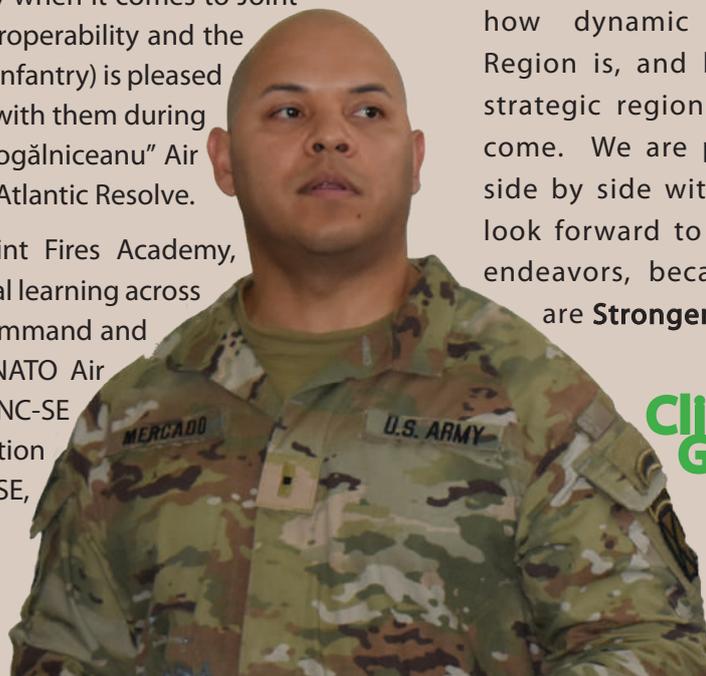
Major General Gregory Anderson
10th Mountain Division

Strategic, operational and tactical, commonly known as levels of war, each have their doctrinal place in how we fight as armies. But to “set the theater” for an attack or defense, militaries function at the operational level – a level focused with



the planning and conduct of campaigns. NATO Multinational Corps South East firmly understands how critical operational level warfighting is, especially when it comes to Joint Air-Land Integration and Interoperability and the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) is pleased to have been able to partner with them during our deployment to “Mihail Kogălniceanu” Air Base in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

Through events like the Joint Fires Academy, which focused on foundational learning across Intelligence, Fires, Mission Command and Air Space Management, to NATO Air Land Integration Training for MNC-SE and Information Collection Fires Rehearsals for MNC-SE,



A Partnership between MNC-SE and 10th MTN DIV

the Romanian military is creating service members who understand the value of integration across multinational and Joint warfighting functions and how those skills build stronger and more lethal teams.

I know with full confidence when I walk into a multinational Joint Operations Center and engage with the students of these courses, they will be able to manage their portion of the Joint Air Ground Integration Center with knowledge and confidence. And more importantly, their mission critical skill sets make NATO forces more lethal and enable dynamic execution of fires.

Through our time in Romania the Mountain Division has learned how dynamic the Black Sea Region is, and how it will be a strategic region for decades to come. We are proud to stand side by side with MNC-SE and look forward to all our future endeavors, because we truly are **StrongerTogether**.

Climb to Glory!

Command Group Corner

Multinational Corps South-East has a Critical and Historical Role in the Fulfillment of NATO's Core Tasks

Major General Abdullah Soydemir

Deputy Commander Multinational Corps South-East



As Deputy Commander of Multinational Corps South-East, I would like to emphasize the fact that it is an honor and a privilege for me to serve with this great team of dedicated and diligent soldiers from across our Alliance. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our Commander, Major General Iacob, and the entire headquarters for their warm welcome and support in my quick integration into the Multinational Corps South-East family.

Strategic competition, pervasive instability and recurrent shocks define our broader security environment. Our key purpose and greatest responsibility is to ensure our collective defence, against all threats, from all directions.

NATO remains the strongest Alliance in history. As in the past, we will stand the test of time in safeguarding the freedom and security of our Allies and contributing to peace and security.

In the light of recent strategic developments and taking into consideration the complex security environment, the existence of a regional allied corps-level command and control capability is not only a proof of the cohesion among Allied nations, but also unequivocally strengthens the Alliance's posture on the Eastern flank. In this perspective, Multinational Corps South-East has a critical and historical role in

the fulfilment of NATO's core tasks: deterrence and defense, crisis prevention and management and cooperative security, as well as in promoting regional security.

Since its establishment, Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East has tremendously developed and increased its operational readiness and effectiveness, factors deemed necessary in accomplishing missions in a collective defense context.

Furthermore, after achieving its Full Operational Capability this fall, Headquarters MNC-SE will continue playing a crucial role in NATO's command and control architecture framework and contribute decisively to the collective defense and a credible deterrence posture of the Alliance.

Although I have recently started my assignment here, I have already witnessed eagerness, professionalism and high readiness at every echelon of this unit. Therefore, I am extremely confident that together we will make this corps a well-respected structure of our Alliance. I am honored to be part of this great team where attitude, commitment and teamwork, in accordance with the commander's leading principles, contribute unconditionally to the achievement of our objectives.

"FORTIS IN UNUM!"

Building a Successful Organization

Brigadier General Valentin Brînzei

Chief of Staff Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East

Creating a great organization is a complex and multifaceted endeavor that involves a combination of factors. These factors can vary depending on the organization's mission, size, and culture. However, when discussing about military organizations things tend to be a little bit different but the fundamental elements associated with great organizations still apply.

Since the decision to establish Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East in Sibiu, Romania, three intense years have passed. Our military organization began its short history by proving worthy of achieving its Initial Operational Capability during Exercise Defender Europe 2021. Since that moment, MNC-SE has been involved in two other major multinational exercises: Loyal Leda 2022 and Defender Europe 2023.

The main endeavor for 2023 is the participation in the most complex and demanding exercise so far, Steadfast Jupiter 2023. It is said that words means acts and the development of this multinational structure from a political intent to a reliable organization, well integrated in the NATO Force Structure, is the perfect example.

The decision to become fully operational capable by the end of this year has been accelerated by the unprovoked, unjustified and illegal military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine in 2022.

Great organizations foster a culture of trust, collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement. All that has been fully demonstrated by the staff of HQ MNC-SE through trainings, participating in various national



Command Group Corner

and multinational exercises, continuous individual and branch development. The common effort lead to the establishment of a robust organizational culture driven to collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement. In the same time encouraging innovation adapting and embracing the existing added value provided by the collaboration with all the other NATO corps headquarters transformed us into an adaptable and well-trained military structure.

Just like regular organizations, HQ MNC-SE set some long-term goals: engaging with the local community, managing crises in the area of operation, commitment to NATO democratic values (individual liberty, the rule of law, and human rights). NATO framework is all about harmonizing the efforts of member states, military commands, and civilian bodies, ensuring they work together seamlessly.

HQ MNC-SE path upon becoming a successful organization is an ongoing process. It requires commitment, dedication, and a willingness to adapt to a changing military environment. I am proud to say that I am part of a multinational team able to overpass every challenge and provide security on the South-Eastern flank of NATO.

"FORTIS IN UNUM!"

MNC-SE: "The Talk of the Town"

Chief Warrant Officer Yannick Godbout
 Command Senior Enlisted Leader



Entrepreneurship is a science, it is an art, starting a new business is one of the most challenging activity that can be undertaken. The world of business is competing in all domain such as logistic, marketing etc. but attracting talented people is the key to success for any corporation including every NATO organization.

Headquarters Multinational Corps Southeast is on the way of achieving Full Operational Capability and to maintain this status, this young unit needs to be an appealing organization to attract the most qualified, motivated and intelligent people. In this short article, I would like to provide you with some highlights in regard to MNC-SE, and perhaps convince those of you that are interested in developing your career, that this is the place you want to work in.

Being a new organization, required people with innovative mindset. You will have great flexibility and liberty to apply your skills and knowledge to the benefits of the organization. If you like ground-breaking activities, developing new process, working in a team environment, we have a place for you.

A new organization in a new infrastructure. You will work in a new and contemporary facility, with the newest technology and comfort. This state of the art facility is conducive to enhanced collaborative work.

The multinational environment is the primary argument of this article. The members of this unit are learning different technics and ways of doing things. You will be exposed to various culture, language, and making friends from all around the world.

If you have never been to Sibiu, you will discover a city rich in history oriented entertainment and cultural activities.

Located at the foot of the

Carpathian Mountains, Sibiu has also a lot to offer to any outdoor enthusiast. Sibiu is a very safe city and it is the perfect place for young families. Lots of business and international corporation have a footprint in Sibiu and this



provides lots of opportunity for spouses to work. If you are an Officer, a Non-Commissioned Officer or a Warrant Officer and you are motivated, eager to learn and like to be challenged, MNC-SE can definitely fulfill your professional and personal expectations.

FORTIS IN UNUM!





From IOC to FOC

OPS G3 Advancing



Colonel Peter Grundhoff

Operations branch overview

In 2022 ACOS G3 wrote an article in this magazine titled “What a Difference a Year Makes” highlighting the achievements of G3 Branch over 2022 and providing some thoughts about 2023. The assessment “2023 promises to be as demanding as 2022 has been” proved to be right. Using the energy gained from achieving the desired C2 capability during exercise LOYAL LEDA, we started 2023 switching our engines to full power taking over the responsibilities for the operation Carpathian Shield from Multinational Division South-East.

OPSCEN

MNC-SE Operations Centre (OPSCEN) holds the responsibility of Vigilant Activities situational awareness. This gives OPSCEN the challenge of having a greater understanding of the MNC-SE Area of Responsibility, NATO’s approach to deterrence and the responsibilities that are both assigned and inherent.

The OPSCEN team keeps growing gradually and steadily and we have recently received several new colleagues to the multinational team. OPSCEN remains a busy and fulfilling place to work and we are eager to transition to the new headquarters and our state of the art OPSCEN.

In the context of HQ MNC-SE actual status/level of development, Current Operations integrating function has intensively built up its capabilities, and during the last three major exercises, the Air Defence Coordination Cell has acted as a hub where tactical level Air Defence Operations have been linked to the NATO Air Component Command concept of C2 over airspace users. Owning this asset, for the first time, Land Component Commands’ Air Defence units affiliated to MNC-SE Training and Exercises program had the opportunity to evolve and perform Air Defence operations into the NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence. Coordination, Control, Early Warning and Reporting process, as well as Tactical Battlefield Management Functions, were professionally designed

and executed with the extensive support of NATO up-to-day Communications and Information System capabilities, elaborated Computer Assisted Modelling and Simulation, and comprehensive NATO interagency cooperation.

CBRN

For Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence Section, the year 2023 proved to be as demanding as promised, with the main objective of preparing for Steadfast Jupiter 23 (STJU23) as the prime venue for our CREVAL on the way of achieving FOC. We have been involved in both CREVAL preparation and STJU 23 planning process which led to several instructive engagements with different NATO Command Structure HQs across Europe.

The new CBRN Defence Policy acknowledges a security environment with regards to CBRN threats that has grown more complex and more challenging in terms of Toxic Industrial Materials or potential use of Weapons of Mass Destruction. The challenged norms and institutions related to the proliferation or use of WMD and emerging and disruptive technologies generated both critical new challenges and opportunities for NATO. From this perspective, our branch been involved in a series of working groups, organized at SHAPE level, focused on maintaining a reliable CBRN warning and reporting system able to generate a shared understanding of the threat and to enable decision-makers to assess the impact and implications of planned or perpetrated CBRN incidents.

A key element for CBRN domain is the integration of HQ MNC-SE CBRN W&R System with Host Nation capabilities and our participation to the annual CBRN Conference, led by Romanian National Military Command Centre, added value to understanding this process and initiated helpful discussions in this respect.

Last but not least, DEFENDER EUROPE 23, “the stone before the mountain”, proved to be a gemstone for

CBRN defence section, creating an ideal venue to train our procedures, to consider and understand the interoperability challenges in a multinational environment, and probably the most important, has created the opportunity of cross-functional analysis and integrated response to CBRN threats through the coordinated efforts of a diversity of staff branches.

Force Protection

As well as all sections of G3 OPS, the Force Protection Section participated in this fruitful exercise. This participation turned out to be a great opportunity to test and improve our Standing Operating Procedures. We enriched our training and the cohesion of the team and we are now looking towards Steadfast Jupiter 23 even more confidently.

Staff development through training

But training during exercises is just the tip of the iceberg. Most of our efforts are being made when we perform our regular personal development inside the base, and many times abroad by participating to specialized courses. One such training abroad was the Tool for Operations Planning Functional Area Services (TOPFAS) Training course hosted by NCIA in Lisbon, Portugal. This Functional Area System just makes everything fast and enables collaborative work. Immediately after achieving desired command and control capability we anticipated the necessity

to prepare ourselves for Force Protection Advisory Team (FPAT) visits in both ways, to receive those from higher but also to prepare our own visits to the subordinate formations. FPAT

will be a challenge after achieving FOC firstly, because it will be the first time we will do this and secondly because it is not an easy job ensuring our bases are protected against a 360 range of threats. Right after IFOC achievement, Liaison and Coordination took charge of the liaison between NATO Allied Land



Command and MNC-SE for a better understanding of the operational environment and to facilitate a common understanding and situational awareness. The section was also involved in several major projects for the HQ ahead of reaching FOC, like command post organization and structure and not to forget the Battle Rhythm.

Conclusion

Overall, it was a busy year for G3, when besides growing, we get more mature and successfully built a reliable team. Looking to the immediate future, we are ready to jump into a challenging Steadfast Jupiter exercise to prove maturity and strength. We know that straightaway after the exercise, there will be one of the most beautiful Christmas markets of Romania trying to distract us from work again.



HQ MNC-SE's Fire Support Element



Colonel George Cornea

"The Fire Support Element (FSE) at corps level is the section that contributes to the synchronization of deep operations to the greatest extent, setting the proper conditions for the close fight and protection of the rear. In the past 3 years, Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East (HQ MNC-SE) put a lot of effort to build a reliable structure that can coagulate the necessary fire support expertise."

HQ MNC-SE's Fire Support and Targeting branch, overlooking targeting, fire support operations, army aviation operations, air defence and airspace management through a sustained effort, made important steps in setting the conditions for a proper integration of all specialists into a performant FSE that is vital to demonstrating a corps' ability to fight in the deep area.

Deep operations at corps level have to be considered as field artillery essential tasks, despite the fact that the multi-domain approach has gained more importance recently due to the exponential increase in complexity of modern warfare, boosted by constant technological progress. The latest conflicts from Ukraine and Syria demonstrated that the presence of field artillery on the battlefield did not lose its relevance. Even though numerous weapon systems and platforms are involved in the process of generating physical, functional, psychological and systemic effects, the commander of the force will be always tempted to employ to the greatest extent very long and long range assets as HIMARS, MLRS and howitzers when advised by FSE specialists that they are at his disposal.

HQ MNC-SE FSE, as any other corps FSE, has to be able to analyze, and schedule the fire support in a coherent and efficient manner having in mind that it needs to exploit all available fires assets, use them in the most efficient way, avoid unnecessary duplications, provide rapid coordination, ensure survivability

and protection, use the lowest echelon capable of delivering effective fire support, establish the fire support coordination measures and de-conflict the airspace.

The corps' FSE put a lot of effort into becoming a professional and trustful structure, due to the fact that the success of HQ MNC-SE operations depends greatly on the ability to plan, coordinate and execute the fire support plan as a main tool for deep operations synchronization, and also on the ability to efficiently execute the targeting process. Its cohesion can be taken as an example of attitude and commitment. Supported

by trainers and experts from AJST, 19 BCD, the US V Corps, 10th MTN DIV, 101st AB DIV, NRDC – ESP, ARRC, HQ MNC-NE, 1stGNC and Romanian armed forces, the members of FSE succeeded in reaching – in a short period of time – the necessary level to demonstrate its ability and capacity to synchronize and coordinate fire support at corps level in front of an experienced evaluation team.

While celebrating this year 180 years of field artillery existence and excellence in the Romanian armed forces, HQ

MNC-SE' FSE members have to be proud that they have been selected to demonstrate their proficiency in the realm of Romanian artillery, also honouring the fact that Sibiu hosted for more than 50 years the Field Artillery School.

Motivated by Louis XIV's words engraved on his cannons, "Artillery adds dignity to what would otherwise be a vulgar brawl", FSE experts are prepared to be challenged and to demonstrate their trustworthiness and expertise.



CREVAL - A Way to Know Thyself

Lieutenant Colonel Claudiu-Marius Sălăvăstru



Sun Tzu's dictum to know thyself and know thy enemy is not only one of the oldest military teaching but also the one that we, in the training and evaluation division, consider the most encompassing. And what better way to know yourself than to go through Combat Readiness Evaluation (CREVAL), a NATO evaluation system that provides assurance to Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) that forces are ready and prepared to meet current and contingent NATO operational priorities?

The aim of CREVAL is twofold: it seeks to evaluate and verify Combat Readiness of Land Forces in accordance with their role and nature and, much more important, it provides the commander of the evaluated unit/headquarters (HQ) with recommendations, comments, and feedback to improve their forces and to support the certification process, following the principles of Impartiality, Transparency and Free of Undue Influence. HQ MNC-SE is already training and undergoing a CREVAL as a Warfighting Corps in order to support the achievement of Full Operational Capability (FOC). NATO Allied Land Command (LANDCOM) backed up by multiple Graduated Response Force (Land) HQs, is deploying to Romania a team of more than 50 Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), officers and NCOs, to capture an in-depth picture of the entire process.

Overall, the CREVAL consists of three stages: preparation, execution and reporting. While the preparation effort begins as soon as a directive is issued at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) level, either by SACEUR Annual Guidance on Education, Training, Exercises and Evaluation or separate correspondence, the evaluated HQ must immediately consider the scheduling implication regarding the required exercise venue and how to structure their preparation with

respect to other events, as well as their ongoing commitments. Especially for an HQ CREVAL, the simplicity of the Formal Report in declaring Combat Readiness does not adequately convey how much time and resources are required to get there. It is the culmination of more than 18 months of detailed preparation and training across all functions of the evaluated

HQ, coupled with the assessment, guidance, and dialogue of the Evaluation Team. The Formal CREVAL Report is the sum of several months of documentation review and three directly-observed evaluation events totalling at least 25 days "on the ground".

In addition to being a forcing mechanism for the evaluated HQ to review and update their Standard Operating Procedures / Standing Operating Instructions to conform to the most current NATO doctrine, the CREVAL pushes the entire HQ to work towards a common goal: Combat Readiness and an associated High Readiness Force status. The process demands that each function analyze the requirements and formulate a detailed plan to achieve the established NATO standards. Centralized control via the operational assessment cycle allows the HQ Commander to mitigate risks and focus efforts within the given timeframe. Self-evaluation is a critical tool in preparing for a CREVAL, therefore discipline and humility are required to address weaknesses. This internal reflection, the necessary critique by the Evaluation Team, and the sheer scale of work involved are the reasons why CREVALs are often described as having their true value in the journey, not necessarily the destination.

The benefits of each CREVAL influence not only the evaluated HQ, but also the greater NATO Land community. In general, each Evaluation Team sources approximately one-third of the SMEs from the previously evaluated HQ, the next evaluated HQ, and additional Graduated Response Force (Land) HQs as necessary. Observer teams from HQs due to be subjects to future evaluations, attend CREVAL events to enhance their knowledge as they begin their own preparations. This methodical cross pollination of experience, coupled with the

Lessons Learned function, allows the CREVAL to serve as a tool to identify positive or negative trends across forces volunteered to NATO, possible adjustments or update of doctrine, and the collection of unique solutions and best practices. In other words, CREVAL is a thorough way to know thyself, thus magnificently illustrating Sun Tzu's more than two thousand years old instruction.





Cyber Terrorism - A New Challenge for Military Security

First Lieutenant Vlad Paraschiv

How many of us have heard of cyberterrorism? Where is it shaped and furthermore, which are the consequences of its actions? Due to the evolution of technology, the framework of conventional wars begins to fall apart and a new form of operational conflict is highlighted amongst the armies of the world: hybrid confrontation. Being a subdivision of this type of confrontation, the impact cyber terrorism has on the real dimension consists in disabling almost any system from working properly with the loss of important information, using malicious software to overwhelm networks, upon which, today, our world is more and more dependent on.

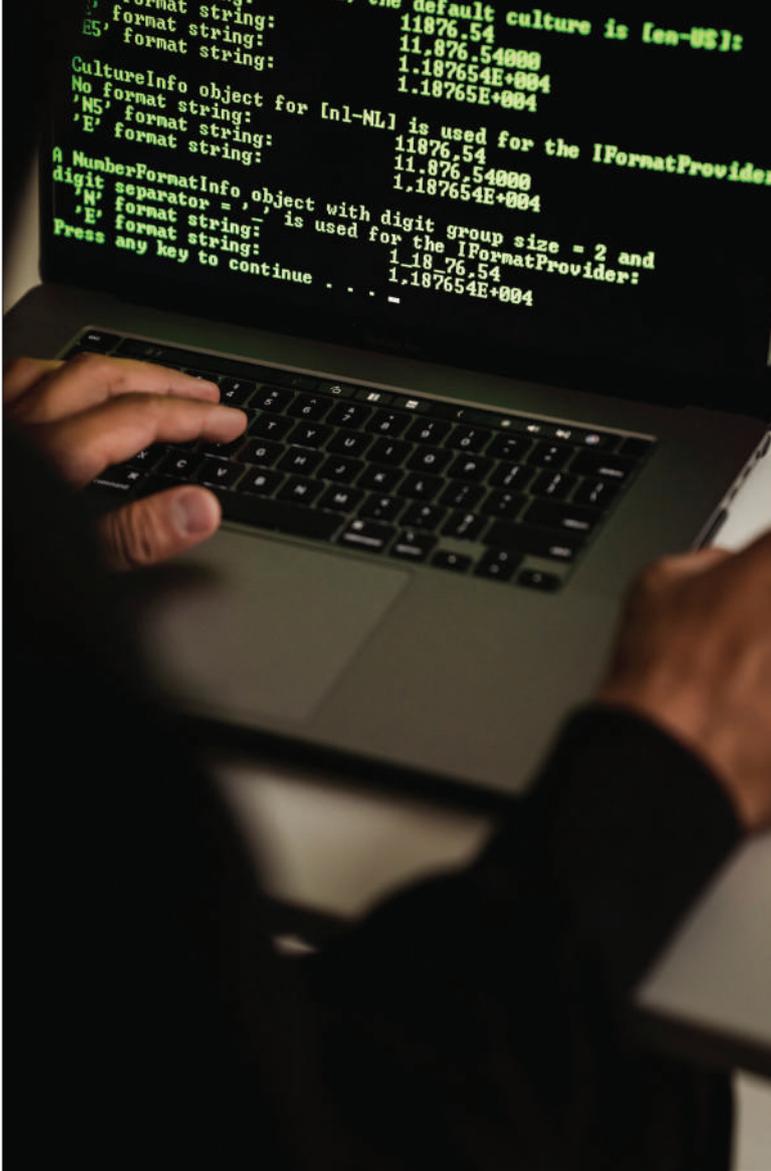
The problem is that, overall, the population tends to ignore the consequences this form of terrorism may present, and by all means, to neglect the proper functioning of computers and networks. It is important to comprehend the fact that one single cyber-attack has the power to paralyze the operational process of essential services in a country or organization. Even though the chosen method to describe cyber terrorism so far may pose as an ultimate threat for all organizations worldwide, the good news is that the world is flexible and adaptable and the proper organizations managed to engage specialists into counter attacking this palette of threats, increasing combat readiness and having a fully situational awareness of the outcomes.

Firstly, we should start from the beginning and explain the profile of cyber terrorists and the infinite playground they choose to play on: cyberspace. In modern times, cyberspace has become the perfect place for terrorists to activate into. Recruiting disciples and motivating them to committing violent actions have reached a superior level, especially due to social media platforms. In order to spread fear, intimidating

outcomes and threats to the population, the terrorist cells use social networks as the perfect method to damage the vulnerable core where the physical and virtual worlds converge.

The ability of the cyber terrorists to penetrate operational military systems and to cause serious damage is seriously developed. A high level of intelligence and penetration capabilities is required, and therefore, it can be stated the fact that a non-state player is not able to emerge on such tasks, due to the complexity with which they are performed. The conflicts in the network domain are calculated in seconds and the time allocated to react is depicted differently in cyberspace. It is impetuous to comprehend the fact that the terrorist cells will most likely purchase services from mercenary hackers and use codes to carry out attacks on the core of the operating military system's infrastructure. Having this new form of challenge, the battlefield is not clearly defined, neither in space, nor in time. Consequently, commanders from all levels must assume the responsibility of taking the initiative and to have the latest advancements in AI in order to enhance performance and efficiency.

Another point to be made is that by zooming in into NATO's perspective of cyber terrorism, the desired effect is to create a shared situational awareness upon all members and by doing so, the Alliance's deterrence capability increases in the face of the newly formed cyber threats. Being cemented as a fifth domain of conflict, alongside land, air, sea and space, cyber terrorism poses as a real concern for NATO's network systems. In order to respond to this sort of attack, the Alliance has strengthened its position towards cyber terrorism through education, exercises, and training.



As the preparation for the most expected event of its existence, the FOC milestone, is intensifying, the Corps is responding more and more accurately to the new challenges that occur. Furthermore, the extent to which cyber terrorism can affect the operational planning is creating a new behavioral pattern within our team. This acknowledgement of cyber terrorism is synthesized in every member's mentality and working process. Nevertheless, acknowledgement is only one part of our cyber evolution. The bricks of flexibility and adaptability must complete our home to protect.

Given the recent development of the IT domain, it is essential to also understand the civil and military cooperation with this private sector, in order to strengthen our defense. Taking into consideration the fact that an attack can occur at any time and on several levels, the staff within HQ MNC-SE must be aware of that and share the knowledge gathered for a better protection in the upcoming future cyber events that might occur.

All in all, this new challenge for the military security systems has no limits and an unknown number of players, and therefore, it is almost impossible to determine the who, what, where, when and how of the attacks. It is a perpetual line of defense, for which NATO and all of its structures, including the youngest HQ of them all, Multinational Corps South East from Sibiu, are prepared to take significant steps into creating a more secure cyber environment and to mitigate the potential for noteworthy harm from cyber threats.

For instance, NATO Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), based at SHAPE in Mons, Belgium, protects NATO's own networks by providing centralized and round-the-clock cyber defense support. This capability evolves on a continual basis and maintains pace with the rapidly changing threat and technology environment. Even more, NATO conducts regular exercises, such as the annual Cyber Coalition Exercise and aims to integrate cyber defense elements and considerations into the entire range of Alliance exercises, including the Crisis Management Exercise (CMX).

Having that in mind and also, in regards to the development of the combat readiness of the HQ MNC-SE organization for the Full Operational Capability (FOC) achievement, it can be stated that cyber defense is as much about people as it is about technology. The Alliance helps its organizations to enhance their national cyber defenses by facilitating information-sharing and the exchange of best practices, and by conducting cyber defense exercises to develop national expertise.



At Ukraine's Border

Russia Presses Hybrid War on Tiny Moldova



Source: The United States Institute of Peace*)

*)USIP is a national, nonpartisan, independent institute, founded by Congress and dedicated to the proposition that a world without violent conflict is possible, practical and essential for U.S. and global security. In conflict zones abroad, the Institute works with local partners to prevent, mitigate, and resolve violent conflict. To reduce future crises and the need for costly interventions, USIP works with governments and civil societies to build local capacities to manage conflict peacefully. The Institute pursues its mission by linking research, policy, training, analysis and direct action to support those who are working to build a more peaceful, inclusive world.

Colonel Silviu Dan Ardeleanu

At a sensitive edge of Russia's war on Ukraine, Moscow is sustaining a campaign to regain control in Moldova, the small, ex-Soviet republic landlocked between Ukraine and Romania. Russia has maneuvered for years to scuttle Moldovans' aims to join the European Union, crimping their economy and controlling easternmost Moldova with Russian troops and proxies. A Kremlin-backed party won a Moldovan regional election in May and Moscow will aim to defeat Moldova's pro-European national government in elections by 2025. The United States and its partners should urgently unify efforts to help Moldovans sustain their independence and stability.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's escalated invasion of Ukraine last year included an armed thrust into Moldova to strengthen Moscow's grip there, according to a map presented then by Putin's ally, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. Ukraine's staunch defense has forestalled any outright Russian military seizure of Moldova. But the Kremlin sustains a subversion campaign that weaponizes corruption, disinformation and economic pressure to hobble Moldova's move toward Europe. Russia's "creeping political annexation" in Moldova has a chance, within two years, to realize its aims of replacing the pro-European government with one or more Russian-backed parties and halting Moldova's integration with Europe.

Russia's escalated war on Ukraine in February 2022 provoked Moldova's government to apply for membership in the European Union (EU), which barely 100 days later accepted the Moldovan candidacy alongside that of Ukraine. Russia's Foreign Ministry blustered that the EU sought the enslaving of both countries to contain Russia. The EU was not thinking of the negative consequences of such a step, it warned. Since

then, the government of Moldovan President Maia Sandu has quickened both domestic reforms, largely against corruption, and talks with EU leaders on accelerating Moldova's accession to the European body.

Since the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, Russia has strived to restore control over Moldova, which Russia's tsars for centuries fortified as imperial Russia's southwest frontier against European and Ottoman Turkish powers. That history as a contested borderland of empires bequeathed the roughly 3 million Moldovans their linguistic and communal mix: Most are Romanian-speakers, culturally tied to the 19 million Romanians to their west, but many are ethnic Ukrainians, Russians, Bulgarians, Roma or Gagauz.

Russia's Hybrid Warfare

In recent years, Putin's regime has escalated a hybrid war to cripple Moldova's move toward Europe, using methods it inflicts on other ex-Soviet republics – especially Ukraine and Georgia – that have sought full independence from Russia. The Kremlin's tools of influence vary, from control over Moldova's gas supplies to the Russian Orthodox patriarch's jurisdiction over the Moldovan Orthodox Church.

Moscow's tactics include:

- a "frozen conflict." Russia controls easternmost Moldova – the narrow eastern bank of the Dniester River, or Transnistria – as an insurgent, separatist entity that Moscow signals Moldova will not recover unless it accepts a Russian veto over its foreign and security policies. Corrupt oligarchs administer Transnistria's government and dominate the economy under supervision by Russian intelligence services backed by Russian troops that have remained since the Soviet era.

- economic pain and paid protests. Moldova is one of Europe’s economically poorest countries, with at least a quarter of its work force performing or seeking work abroad in recent years. Russia, until last year Moldova’s sole supplier of gas, hiked prices and cut supplies, multiplying home heating and electricity costs four to seven times in 2022 and spiking inflation. The Kremlin selectively punishes Moldovans for defying its will; last year it banned imports of Moldovan farm produce for supposed insect infestations – except for crops from Transnistria and from Orhei, a district where the Russia-backed Shor Party holds local power. As Moscow deepens Moldovans’ pain, the Shor Party sponsor protests demanding President Sandu’s resignation –and, has paid protesters in cash for participating.
- disinformation. Russia uses its state media, including television networks, plus social media and proxy groups such as the Shor Party, to mislead Moldovans with disinformation, say Moldova’s government, the independent local research organization, Watchdog, and the Hybrid CoE analysis center, run by EU and NATO states. Disinformation includes “creation and dissemination of fake news, and so-called deepfakes in particular”, such as a video engineered last October that purported to record President Sandu discussing with Ukraine’s prime minister a supposed Moldovan military mobilization against Russia, Hybrid CoE reported.
- strategic corruption. Varied sources have publicized Moscow’s remunerations or other support of Moldovan “oligarchs” and their political machines for advancing Kremlin aims.

the coming three years, following a commitment of 1.2 billion Euros since late 2021. U.S. support has included economic and prodemocracy programs, plus \$267 million in emergency help for Moldova’s energy crises from the war on Ukraine and Peace Corps volunteers. Planned new efforts will aim to advance specific judicial and police reforms that the European Union requires for membership.

While the governments and bodies helping Moldova have met periodically to share information on their assistance, a standing coordination secretariat could do much more to unify the overall support for Moldova’s EU-focused reforms. A particular reason for this is that Moldova has a small, heavily burdened state bureaucracy still inexperienced in many of the efforts required for EU membership.

In the shadow of Europe’s biggest war in decades, Moldova and its ambition are a vital part of building stability and the rule of law in Europe. Broad European and bipartisan U.S. support for it exists. While the immediate crises and headlines tend to erupt elsewhere in this wider conflict, good statecraft demands that we attend steadily to the Moldovans’ struggles to prevent violent crisis from spreading.

Russia’s Gas, Moldova’s Vulnerability

For the past 30 years, Russia has tried to sustain its own, and weaken Europe’s, influence in Moldova with largely the same tools it applies to that purpose in Ukraine, Georgia and other ex-Soviet republics. These include energy supplies, the strategic corruption of local politicians, Russian military or proxy control over parts of each country’s territory, cyber-attacks and other subversion. Like other Eastern European nations over recent decades, Moldova has made progress in building a democracy, with credible elections and transitions of power. Yet the country remains deeply vulnerable to authoritarianism, corruption and Russia – especially because of the Kremlin’s grip over energy supplies that are Moldova’s economic aorta.

Weeks after Sandu’s party won a parliamentary election last year with its promise to strengthen Moldova’s integration with Europe, Russia used its near-monopoly position as Moldova’s gas supplier to impose a price increase and threaten a cutoff of supplies if Moldova did not make concessions to help sustain Russia’s economic and political leverage in the country. Sandu’s government made minimal concessions, declared an energy emergency and accelerated projects to let Moldova import more gas or electricity from Poland, Romania or other countries. Russia enhances its energy dominance over Moldova by delivering its gas through the country’s tiny, Russian-backed separatist region of Transnistria. There, a Russian state-controlled power plant generates 70 percent of Moldova’s electrical power. This arrangement keeps the Moldovan state dependent on Russia both for electricity and gas, and helps discourage Moldova from assertive actions against Russia’s Transnistrian interests.

Helping Moldova’s Stability

Europe and the United States are supporting Moldova’s efforts to dismantle systemic corruptions and build the more inclusive, transparent governance that will be vital to sustaining democracy, peace and stability. Last month’s summit conference in Moldova of the still-young European Political Community was a symbolic display of support. A steady stream of visits by high-level officials from Moldova’s democratic partners should be made to continue. The European Union has since announced that as much as 600 million Euros could be made available to help Moldova over



Steadfast Jupiter 2023 - A Testbed for Logisticians

Colonel Paul-Ioan Szucs



HQ Support

Dave Waters, Director of Global Facilities, Real Estate & Logistics at Steris Corporation in UK said that “Without logistics the world stops.” This – translated into military world – sounds like Without Logistics, a military operation cannot be concluded.

In NATO, for decades, logistics was somehow “ignored”. Not because it was not important at all, but because Logistics is a national responsibility, according to the Multinational Logistics Doctrine. The member countries make available the resources they own, decide upon their usage and prioritize them. Therefore, the logistician’s job was made easy: nations were to take care of themselves in terms of food, water, fuel, ammunition, mission essential equipment. Multinational logistic solutions were very “light” tackled, mainly within conceptual framework yet with no practical and realistic development.

The unfortunate events related to the outbreak of war in Ukraine provide us with an entire “book”, full of lessons learned. Not so many in terms of maneuver, but quite a few related to how we need to adapt to modern warfare and how to prepare our economies for a complex landscape of challenges. For instance, the equipment providers often lacked direct access to the battlefield to train personnel, and organize storage, maintenance and repair.

The exercise STEADFAST JUPITER 23 (STJU23) is the first training event where NATO is making remarkable efforts to harmonize existing concepts with new ideas and national caveats.

Still, Logistics’ doctrines and concepts need to be adapted to the realities and tools of modern warfare – long-range precision fires, drones and other surveillance and target acquisition tools have rendered stocks and logistic hubs more vulnerable. Disguise and camouflage technologies have also evolved. All these factors need to be considered in the context of multi-domain operations.

Thus, the logistician gets busy all of the sudden. Realistic planning of sustainment is paramount and has to be adapted to the operational environment. Quality, simplicity, flexibility, mobility, dispersion of resources, feasibility, continuity and unity of command are just a few principles logisticians should take into account when planning and conducting logistic support.

New concepts such as ‘distributed sustainment operations’ have emerged, and seem better suited to today’s battlefield challenges. It will take a while to see these new concepts understood, embraced, implemented and fully functional. But we have to make this step to continue addressing these global responsibilities.

We have to make a change and make it significant and effective.





Our Project – Building from Scratch

Lieutenant Colonel Nicolae Bunescu

Within the context of the current geostrategic climate, addressing the threats related to asymmetric warfare, the development of capacities aimed at ensuring logistical support for armed interventions, especially aerial ones, is vital. In this framework, Romania's commitments assumed through treaties with NATO and other Strategic Partners which include, among others, allocation of 2.5% of the gross domestic product (GDP) to national defense and security spending, create the opportunity to increase investments in military logistics capabilities.

Based on the international commitments assumed by Romania, the Ministry of National Defence developed a proposal for the establishment of a national command and control capability in the land domain to be made available to NATO. This capability will enable performance, in peacetime, crisis, and conflict, of the functions of a Land Component Command (LCC), for planning, coordination, and leading of national forces as well as other allied forces and/or subordinate partners in operations.

Given the adaptation of the NATO command structure and the necessity to adjust to an unstable regional and international security environment, Romania took the initiative to build a multinational command and control capability at an Army-Corps level. Operational coherence

between national and allied defense plans, as well as better operational integration with allied forces and the forces of Strategic Partners, will be ensured through the investment objective of establishing the Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East (HQ MNC-SE). In this regard, the Supreme Council of National Defence of Romania approved the establishment of HQ MNC-SE on Romanian territory back in 2020.

Since the relocation of HQ MNC-SE to Sibiu in 2021 – expected to emerge as a significant command and control centre for both national and foreign military structures, particularly from NATO-member countries – the area became of strategic importance. This state of affairs recommends achievement of objectives that meet the operational requirements mandated by cooperation treaties concluded at the international level aimed at enhancing NATO's regional security. Therefore, the military personnel within Sibiu garrison conduct complex training and staff development activities, in the same time coordinating, commanding, and controlling sensitive military activities in the area, in partnership with international-level structures. In addition to the NATO Security Investment Programme with projects being implemented in the area, national investment projects for establishments were also proposed for implementation.



In accordance with NATO' strategy for Eastern Europe and the international treaties to which Romania is a party, it is imperative to implement specific programs for the development of the material and logistic base. The attainment of the Static Infrastructure Investment objective of the HQ MNC-SE leads to the seamless operation of command and control structures as well as those pertaining to national and regional security through the realization of investment objectives that ensure not only the smooth execution of specific activities, but also operational logistical support.

By achieving the investment objective, the necessary foundation is ensured for the performance of NATO command and control activities in the Black Sea region under optimal conditions. Romania, honouring its commitment as a Host Nation, provided the property on which the new premises of the HQ is built – located in the central area of Sibiu, covering an area of approximately 40.000 square meters, on an irregular plan shape – vesting in the Ministry of Defense with the right of administration. The investment objective has been and will continue to be financed from state budget (constituted in accordance with the legislation in force) according to the annual investment program lists.

The proposed investment project developed around several general objectives, considered according to purpose and interoperability. For instance, through the execution phase of the investment project, the old buildings proposed for consolidation and rehabilitation, the new constructions,

and the associated infrastructure have been dimensioned, designed, and equipped in accordance with the necessary functions and the requirements of the HQ personnel while adhering to the standards, norms, and specialized legislation in the field. All spaces requirements have been fulfilled at a high level in terms of interior finishes and furnishings to ensure a high level of comfort as by NATO standards.

Our infrastructure project exhibits specific construction characteristics that set it apart from other types of projects. Taking into consideration the high complexity of the project, these characteristics refer to appropriate security measures, and strict regulations that apply to it, the necessity of using sustainable construction materials and techniques with minimal environmental impact, long-term planning, and meticulous attention to logistical aspects.

To sum up, given the complexity of the infrastructure project, along with the strict regulations and specific requirements, it can be said that managing the approval, bidding, execution, and payment processes for this project were definitely more challenging compared to other projects of the kind. It required specialized expertise, seamless coordination, and close attention to detail. During the development of the infrastructure works, the contractor faced various challenges with this project, notably a shortage of specialists. However, digitization and innovative solutions enabled the contractor to effectively overcome challenges and turn our project into a wonderful establishment for HQ MNC-SE.



FOC – What Does



FOC! Beyond this acronym that has focused the attention of HQ MNC-SE for several years, it's possible to find the milestone of utmost importance that will enable the HQ to provide to NATO a new Corps-level Command and Control capability able to fully take part in the deterrence and if need be defence of the Alliance in the South-Eastern part of SACEUR AOR. And tomorrow, once FOC effective, the HQ will on its turn be able to share its own experience and

In October this year, Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East (HQ MNC-SE) will achieve its Full Operational Capability (FOC). This state of affairs will mainly be reached after the Combat Readiness Evaluation (CREVAL) of the Headquarters (HQ) during the Steadfast Jupiter 23 (STJU23) exercise. As such, the FOC does represent a crucial milestone for the HQ MNC-SE on its path towards development: it will actually validate the operational level obtained by the HQ and its ability to fully take part in the NATO deterrence, and if need be defence, on the South-Eastern part of SACEUR's area of responsibility (AOR). An

perturbed by the sudden pressure of the events coming from the East. The Russian invasion in Ukraine urged HQ MNC-SE, in coordination with the higher NATO and Romanian national commands, to significantly accelerate the development process. That evolution reflected into the participation in a series of exercises – not necessarily initially planned – just as Loyal Leda 22, Defender 23, Steadfast Jupiter 23. A first step achieved on this way to FOC appeared when HQ MNC-SE reached the projected Command and Control capability in December 2022 as a result of the whole HQ commitment in Loyal Leda 22 exercise. This achievement enabled HQ MNC-SE to take over the responsibility of Headquarters Multinational Division South-East (HQ MND-SE) one month later by becoming the NATO Land Command and Control capability in the South-Eastern part of SACEUR's AOR. Therefore, in parallel with its still ongoing development in all domains – infrastructure, CIS, individual and collective training, preparation of the exercises - HQ MNC-SE has also - from this moment on - to exert Command and Control over the NATO subordinate units and to fully act as an operational HQ towards the higher NATO command structures. Today, HQ MNC-SE will obtain the FOC after a demanding monitoring led by the evaluation team during the planning and execution of the critical Steadfast Jupiter 2023 exercise. As such, FOC represents the achievement of a long and intense cycle of development that will allow HQ MNC-SE to switch to another prospect, that is to say a consolidation phase that will encompass yet without being limited to: deepening knowledge of the staff, improving procedures at branch level, and further training of the whole staff coordination, still gaining in cohesion. Now, as "there is no wealth but men" (« Il n'est de richesse que d'hommes » Jean Bodin, 16th century), the technocratic description of what FOC represents for HQ MNC-SE may certainly not be enough to report on the not ordinary – not to say extraordinary - human adventure lived every day by the staff to gain this label!



entrance in the adult age somewhere! But beyond the concept that it covers, obtaining FOC represents much more than a theoretic level of ambition for all HQ MNC-SE staff



FOC: an enduring process for a crucial milestone

Obtaining FOC stands as the culmination of a long process initiated in July 2018 when Romania offered to host a new corps-level Command and Control structure in the South-Eastern part of SACEUR's AOR. As an initial start, a core staff in Bucharest, through its participation in the Defender Europe 21 exercise, managed to obtain the Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in June 2021, just before moving to Sibiu. The IOC endorsed the ability for the HQ to establish an initial advanced planning capability and, as such, contribute to the Alliance deterrence by posture management. The planned development of the HQ in Sibiu was however

FOC: the result of an utmost commitment of the HQ staff

Obtaining FOC for HQ MNC-SE, above all, required an unprecedented commitment of the personnel. One may imagine that developing such a heavy and complex

It Mean?

Lieutenant Colonel Olivier Rouanet

start becoming an expertise provider for the Force structure. Now, the path to obtain FOC may also be considered as an extraordinary human adventure of a committed staff that will, once they will join back their national armies, build the engine for change of their national systems. Maybe they will remember with emotion the time they were serving in the HQ to obtain FOC, surely they will be proud to have written with their colleagues an illustrious page of NATO History!



structure as a corps-level HQ from scratch is not a piece of cake. The planned HQ MNC-SE development initially set up already foresaw an ambitious program. Now, the acceleration of this process required from the HQ to adopt an extraordinary agile attitude dedicated to cope with the multiple challenges to face, sometimes at the same time or interfering the ones with the others! Establishing a corps-level HQ does indeed encompass the



needs to prepare adequate infrastructure, deploy classified CIS, hire and, more specifically, train staff, think and develop the concept of employment, plan the exercises, eventually train the staff as a whole! All these already foreseen challenges had, however, to be managed aside new responsibilities and an almost continuous involvement in exercises. As a result, the staff personnel found themselves confronted with numerous dissimilar situations generated by unavoidable interferences of the intense pace of activities with the ever-evolving environment. This situation led the HQ MNC-SE staff officer to develop remarkable adaptation skills to react in a professional manner to the pressure of events, even in a fast-changing environment or with challenging logistics. Confronting reality, he has revealed himself flexible, imaginative and polyvalent! This context also led the staff to develop a unique, strengthened cohesion spirit that enhanced cooperation between individuals and branches. Mutual support and understanding are the common critical quality of the HQ staff to face the unique FOC objective. In this

context, multinationality proved to be a multiplier factor of efficiency as the input from different experiences provided obvious added value to the whole. As an even further extended cooperation spirit, one should also mention the helpful support brought by ARRC or the US National Guard, the fruitful exchanges with other more experimented corps-level HQs, and above all MNC-NE, RRC-FR, NRDC-SP, and eventually the decisive input from augmentees of different origins during the exercises. FOC! Beyond this acronym that has focused the attention of HQ MNC-SE for several years, there is the milestone of utmost importance that will enable the HQ to provide to NATO a new corps-level Command and Control capability, able to fully take part in the deterrence and, if need be, defence of the Alliance in the South-Eastern part of SACEUR's AOR. And tomorrow, once FOC effective, the HQ will, on its turn, be able to share its own experience and start becoming an expertise provider for the Force structure. Now, the path to obtain FOC may also be considered as an extraordinary human adventure of a committed staff that will, once joining back their national armies, build the engine for change of their national systems. Maybe they will remember with emotion the time they were serving in the HQ to obtain FOC, but surely they will be proud to have written with their colleagues an illustrious page of NATO History!





Family Support

VS

Morale Welfare and Recreation

Colonel Ciprian Pojar

Bottom line up front: Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East, the youngest NATO Corps Headquarters in Europe, remains committed to set, develop and improve the conditions to ensure fast and smooth integration of all its newly assigned personnel and their dependents, regardless of their nationality.

As some NATO countries decided to increase their presence at HQ MNC-SE, Luxembourg maintained its contribution in kind and the others sent their initial representatives, more and more Romanian and international military personnel from Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Croatia, France, North Macedonia, Portugal, Spain and Turkiye continued joining our Headquarters (HQ) this year.

Up to now HQ MNC-SE's family is comprised of brothers in arms from Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Turkiye. Moreover, other countries have showed their interest for contributing with personnel to our organization, therefore many other new members are yet to come.

Happy families at "home" translate in dedication, implication, 100% commitment and improved efficiency of the organization's personnel at work.

Through the specialized support for its members, HQ MNC-SE will continue to ensure their access to all benefits offered by membership of the organization and those resulted from the Framework Nation's role that Romania assumed, with a special focus on obtaining the rights, entitlements, privileges and exemptions granted by the Agreement signed between the Romania's Government, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and Headquarters, Supreme Allied Command (SACT) by its international staff and their entitled dependents.

In this stage of construction of HQ MNC-SE, with all its implications, the words "validation" and "permanently improving" are used very frequently and in the Family Support and MWR domains they are no exception.

Therefore, after three years of tremendous work and many lessons identified, for optimizing the structure of the former HQ MNC-SE's Family Support & Morale section was split. Without changing the number of positions, now, instead of one big section with shared responsibilities in both mentioned domains, the new structure of the HQ has 2 specialized sections, one for each domain as follows:

1. Family Support section;



2. Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) section. The purpose of this change is to better address the needs and challenges from both Family Support and MWR domains. It will ensure not only much greater efficiency of the two different specialized sections, but also better serving the interests of the HQ MNC-SE community.

In the area of Family Support, processes and procedures are already in place, they were tested, improved, adapted, harmonized and almost all of them were also validated. This is the outcome of tremendous work, continuous liaison, cooperation, and coordination to build and maintain and even strengthen an efficient and "win-win" relationship with the local and national legal entities.

In the area of MWR only some activities such as cultural promotion, Christmas tree lightening, 2023 Spring Ball, summer school and some outdoor activities (picnics, trips and tours) have been facilitated or developed. This area will be subject of consistent improvement that is already planned.

The most sensitive challenge identified remains, as it has been the case since 2020, the educational options currently available in Sibiu municipality.

Family Support personnel initiated constant lobby

and liaison with educational establishments from Romanian and foreign important educational hubs aiming to identify some options of instruction with English language for Cambridge International and Baccaalaureate curricula. The outcome of these permanent efforts is that some enrollment opportunities meeting the international personnel's needs were identified in some private schools for the HQ members' benefit.

HQ MNC-SE and especially the Family Support professionals remain committed to closely collaborate and encourage the local and central authorities to take all actions needed to support both Public and Private educational systems to enable and provide proper educational enrollment opportunities for HQ MNC-SE members' children, regardless of their nationality.

In parallel with the HQ MNC-SE's Family Support domain's operationalization, the process of the 46th Support Regiment's Family Support and International Cooperation Office operationalization kicked off too. Now, the HQ MNC-SE's Specialists, not only provide the training of the personnel nominated to tackle the challenges raised by the fulfilling of this structure's mission, but they also assist the Support Regiment for developing,





MNC-SE Challenge VS SIBIU Challenge

Colonel Dorin Ilie

Even though it is generally admitted that no plan survives the first contact, I would add that the challenge that still remains is about how to keep the plan still workable. In my opinion, this is valid for every domain, be that military or civilian.

In order to support this idea for the military domain, I would choose MNC-SE's plan to reach its full maturity. It resembled with a path marked with plenty of milestones towards the end state, Full Operational Capability (FOC). At that moment, the envisioned deadline was to be achieved within a few years. Since the Brussels Summit, the preparation for the development of the Multinational Corps South-East started with its official establishment in the summer of 2020. Since then, all staff started the transition from vision to facts. It was not so easy to track all the subsequent activities comprised by the plan, to make it happen as it had been designed. Adjustments were necessary continuously, of course. Perhaps the most important was due to the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by Russian Federation in February 2022, causing the FOC

deadline for the new HQ MNC-SE to be moved to the left. The plan was severely adjusted, but not discarded. None of us was discouraged, MNC-SE "micro teams" carried on, each one on their line of effort, concurring to the same goal. Undoubtedly, overexertion occurred sometimes, but honourably overcome with expected level of resilience.

For the civilian domain, I would choose Sibiu City where HQ MNC-SE is located. Moving into a deep-dive research among plethora of activities that Sibiu local authorities have been hosting throughout this year, I have in mind sports activities that incorporated some enduring challenges like marathon or triathlon contests, the last one being labelled as the Sibiu Triathlon Challenge. It is amazing how both of these aforementioned tough competitions resemble the MNC-SE's race towards FOC. It is all about starting with the appropriate mindset and attitude, focused throughout, determined, persistent, resilient, and keeping an eye on your watch to meet all your objectives, well established in advance. I would like to point out especially the Sibiu Triathlon Challenge that comprises three 'fights': swimming, bike and running, all in a row. All

the way through, one is obliged to adapt to the permanent pressure imposed by the environment (e.g. cold water, strong wind, heavy rain, wet road, hot temperatures, even cheering spectators that impose high expectations, etc). Every single one wants to be the winner, or at least a finisher, but, maybe the most important thing, they all want to arrive safe and sound at the finish line. Even if I attended both of the events with some other MNC-SE fellow members, I got this extraordinary, uncanny feeling that all participants had been acting like a single body, moving towards the same unique goal, crossing the FINISH LINE, and by accomplishing this, securing a medal that would be shining on their sweating chest.

In a different approach, this might look like the concept unveiled within the "Team of teams" book, by General Stanley McChrystal, the former commander of the International Security Assistance Force, in Afghanistan. According to him, one of the main findings from that experience was that giving small groups the freedom to experiment and share what they learn across the entire organization, teams can respond more quickly, communicate more freely, and make better and faster decisions. It seems to me that MNC-SE is about to reach FOC just like crossing the finish line with the same great feeling of a team of teams, overpassing a great challenge that defined and, in the same time, honored us. It is the last effort prior to reaching the deadline, and all of us are looking forward to this great accomplishment while doing their best!

Photo Source: www.patrimoniul.sibiu.ro



Nutrition and Physical Activities - Building a Culture of Health in the Military



Lieutenant Colonel Nicu Constantin

It is highly likely that most of the military personnel will consider trivial another discussion about nutrition and physical activities. But, from my point of view, the health and readiness of military personnel should be among the top priorities



across the army. Moreover, it is highly desirable to educate our forces in developing and maintaining healthy habits for the long term, considering that we live and work in an environment dominated by unhealthy food options. And, as an enthusiastic long-distance trail runner, I can say for a fact that good nutrition and regular physical activity are the key factors to boost your day-by-day energy, to improve your fitness level and mental toughness.

When it comes to nutrition, it is about the provision and consumption of food in quantities, quality and proportions sufficient to preserve body performance and to protect against disease and injury. So, one should always consider providing their body with quality nutrients, instead of considering the quantity of meals you want to eat. This is required mostly due to the fact that there is no other way

to increase your energy level, to strengthen your immune system and, generally, to feel well more often. A nutritious and balanced diet consists of lean proteins, carbohydrates and good fats.

Regarding physical activity, whether you are a competitive athlete or just practice a recreational sport, there is no doubt that it has many health benefits. And it doesn't take the marathon training to see real health gains. Just a 30-minute walk on five days of the week is all that most people need. Getting any amount of exercise is better than none. But one should not stop at this average level and should choose to increase it. And, if one still searches for excuses not to adopt a healthy life style, remind these motivational quotes: "If you don't make time for your wellness, you will be forced to



make time for your illness." (Joyce Sunada) and "If you think it's too expensive to eat healthy, you are going to hate the cost of being sick." (Ashleigh Brilliant).

As usual, also during year 2023, Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East personnel attended the regular physical training sessions, in accordance with our battle rhythm. And, in addition to that, some of our colleagues competed in running, trail running, Spartan races, cycling, rowing, archery and triathlon (swimming, cycling and running) competitions. And, by doing that, they served as a role models and motivational examples for the staff to continue to capitalize on their physical status.



Morale, Welfare and Recreation – A Condition for Success to Thrive

Warrant Officer Adela Oltean

People are the most important resource in any organization, fundamental to its mission success. Achieving and maintaining a good balance between the two, the people and the mission, is essential to maintain the effectiveness of our force since, as Oscar Wilde put it, "Success is a science; if you have the conditions, you get the result."

Allow me to introduce you to the new Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) section of the Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East as I shall be telling you about our faith in putting people first for organizational success. Present in all NATO structures, this compartment has the important mission of providing recreational opportunities for service members



and their dependents. Lifting morale among service members sets the conditions for them to conduct operations in the most effective way while creating strong relationships so necessary in performing our daily routine tasks as well as well-being and synergism among colleagues, essential to reach our goals. Moreover, here, at the HQ MNC-SE, we are a fortunate case of "Outstanding leaders go out of their way to boost the self-esteem of their personnel. If people believe in themselves, it's amazing what they can accomplish." (Sam Walton).

The new MWR section - resulted from splitting the former Family Support & MWR Section into two complementary entities - is gradually becoming visible within the HQ MNC-SE environment. Step by step, we are all discovering the meaningful purpose of our HQ and we are striving with great pride to contribute to the development and achievement of this purpose. It is not an easy process but collaborating, all together, we are stronger (Fortis in Unum) and more capable to achieve mission success.

People regard leisure as essential to cultivate temperament and self-development the more frequently they participate in these activities. Leisure activities can improve the physical and mental health of individuals and have the significance of regulating the body and mind, alleviating the stress of life, and providing a pleasant experience. Therefore, we are planning numerous projects for a close or a more distant future, with the intent to address as many needs as possible. These plans largely include recreation services (trips, tours, and outdoor recreation), life skills and educational services (Arts and Crafts, language, education and cultural advising), volunteering,



Charity Bazaar, Winter, Spring Ball and many more meant to contribute to mental well-being and self-fulfillment.

There is no point in denying that we are facing different challenges given the fact that this new HQ is constantly growing and it is crucial at this point to learn as much as possible about the passions and preferences of each individual in order to offer them specific activities. Effective communication with all staff is a key element to planning activities that would include as many people as possible. MWR provides the processes and the HQ's Support Regiment is making available the necessary means and infrastructure to assist us in achieving our goals, particularly introducing our members and their dependents to Sibiu social and cultural life, providing them with the opportunity of discovering wonderful Romania and making as many dear memories as possible during their tour of duty in this HQ.

As for our achievements so far, I would like to mention the 2021 and 2022 Christmas Tree Lighting ceremonies, picnics and other outdoor activities such as trips and tours. Another important project is the Spouses' Club of Sibiu (SCS) as the well-being, readiness, and resilience of military families are also conditions to mission success, sources of strength and inspiration to the HQ members. It kicked off on October 27th, 2022 with 7 members only and it will gradually develop into a real community of spouses through participation in recreation and social activities, language courses and cultural promotion, Arts & Crafts workshops, dine outs, Energy dancing & Yoga classes, trips and so many more. Ensuring that our HQ members' families are properly looked after and their needs taken care of is one of our heartfelt duty as our military can thus fully focus on accomplishing the mission especially during periods of hard work with long working hours. Future achievements in infrastructure will help us envisage

more and diverse activities that will hopefully be suitable for and involve more and more personnel and their families.

It is said that the road to success comes through hard work, determination, and sacrifice. HQ MNC-SE is actually the road to combat readiness, intensively preparing for quite some time to achieve Full Operational Capability (FOC). In this accelerated process to achieve this important objective, the personnel are working long hours, giving 110% of their capabilities, putting in a lot of effort, knowledge and dedication. After this certification event, once declared fully capable of fulfilling all the missions for which our HQ was established, MWR will be striving to offer our HQ members as many leisure activities as possible so that they maintain a very high level of professionalism and readiness, on the road towards the mission success while caring for and maintaining the cohesion of its people along the way.

After all, the degree of participation of individuals in leisure activities can only create more leisure benefits for themselves. Ultimately, the goal is to get to know each other better, and to enjoy spending time together while reinforce the organization's core values, increasing individual and organizational readiness. At any time, we, the people from MWR will do our best to create opportunities for our HQ members to increase resiliency and improve families' well-being, provide a support system to enhance coping skills, supporting in the best possible way our military community.

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Engagements with the Local Community of Sibiu



NATO Day held on 4th April at HQ MNC-SE

During the ceremony that celebrated the 74th anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty by the founding members, Major General Dragoş-Dumitru Iacob, the commander of Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East underlined the importance of HQ MNC-SE unit on the Eastern Flank of the Alliance: „The Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East is contributing to the deterrence of any hostile intentions against the Alliance and ensures the command and control of NATO's land operations in the Black Sea Region. The headquarters also ensures an operational integration of the Allied forces, in support of strengthening the security architecture on the Eastern Flank of the North Atlantic Alliance“.

Europe Day

Each year on 9 May, Europe celebrates the founding of the European Union, through the signing of the Schuman Declaration in 1950. On this day, in the presence of representatives of the military structures and local public authorities from Sibiu, an official delegate from Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East, participated to a ceremony at the "Monument of the soldier of all times", event organised to celebrate the spirit of peace and unity. Moreover, the significance of this day is an opportunity to reflect on Europe's achievements and look ahead to a brighter future.



Photo credit: Land Forces Academy

German President visit to Sibiu

President Klaus Iohannis and his German counterpart, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who was on a state visit to Romania, on Thursday 25th of May 2023, were in Sibiu, this being the fourth visit to the city of a German president after the Romanian Revolution. The two officials went to the city hall, met with the representatives of the German community and visited the "Samuel von Brukenthal" National College and the fortified Evangelical Church in Cristian village.

Photo credit: www.turnulsfatului.ro



Romania National Flag Day celebrated in Sibiu

Commander of Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East, Major General Dragoş-Dumitru IACOB attended the military ceremony held at Central Square in Sibiu, on the occasion of the national flag day. The 26th of June represents an important part of Romania's national history, dating back to 1821 when the colours blue, yellow and red were painted by a group of revolutionary artists on a canvas, eventually becoming a symbol of the Revolutionary cause in Wallachia, part of modern-day Romania.



Photo credit: Land Forces Academy

The Commissioning Ceremony of the Land Forces Academy cadets

Given the excellent cooperation between Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East and Land Forces Academy from Sibiu, Major General Dragoş-Dumitru Iacob, commander of HQ MNC-SE, was honored to accept the invitation to participate at the unique commissioning army ceremony of the Land Forces Academy cadets. After three or four years of training, the significance of the ceremony, for the newly officers that graduated and commissioned as second lieutenants means both the acceptance as members of the Romanian Army Officer Corps and leaders and an important milestone in their lives and careers.

National Firefighters Day

This year, the National Firefighters Day ceremony that took place in Sibiu Main Square, brought together public and local officials including a delegate of Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East. National Firefighters Day, celebrated every year on the 13th of September, is a special time not only to stop and reflect on the sacrifices that firefighters make to ensure the safety of their communities and environment, but a day to show appreciation for the significant contribution of current and former firefighters.



Photo credit: Sibiu County's Inspectorate for Emergency Situations

Distinguished Visitors at HQ MNC-SE

Mircea Geoana

NATO Deputy Secretary General

Commander of Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East, Major General Dragoş-Dumitru Iacob received the visit of the Deputy Secretary General of NATO, His Excellency, Mr. Mircea Geoană, in June, in Sibiu. On this occasion, Maj. Gen. Iacob provided a briefing about HQ MNC-SE missions and the responsibility assumed from the beginning. During the event the two officials met with the headquarters staff and had the opportunity to get familiar with their priorities and main objectives.

"I say, without any hesitation, that it is probably one of the most modern and performing investments of this kind at the level of the entire North Atlantic Alliance. It is a subject of pride for me and for us", appreciated the first Deputy Secretary General of NATO from Romania, Mr. Mircea Geoană.



Major General John Mead,

Allied Joint Force Command Naples

The Allied Joint Force Command Naples - JFCNP Deputy Chief of Staff – Plans, Major General John MEAD was informed about HQ MNC-SE current operational phase and forthcoming development steps on the path to achieving operational capability by the end of 2023, as part of a visit the distinguished official paid to the HQ in June.



Lieutenant General Nicola Zanelli

Deputy Commander of NATO Allied Land Command

During a visit in August 2023, Lieutenant General Nicola Zanelli, Deputy Commander of NATO Allied Land Command appreciated the experience of the headquarters staff and declared himself confident that the objectives set for exercise STEADFAST JUPITER 2023 will be achieved.



in 2023

Major General Gregory Anderson 10th Mountain Division

Maj. Gen. Gregory Anderson, the Commander of the 10th Mountain Division, met with the headquarters' staff during a visit in Sibiu. The distinguished official learnt about the latest developments expressing his willingness to further support the training process of the newest corps of NATO.



Admiral Rob Bauer NATO Chair of the Military Committee

Admiral Rob Bauer visited HQ MNC-SE in Sibiu and Romanian Battle Group with France as framework nation – ROU BG (FRA FN) deployed in Cincu. During his trip in Romania, focused on key NATO and Romanian assets dedicated to the Alliance's Collective Defence, the Chair of the NATO Military Committee, Admiral Rob Bauer, was briefed at the Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East, about the headquarters' role, specific missions, current operational stage and upcoming development phases in the context of current European security environment. In his speech, he underlined that both HQ MNC-SE and HQ MND-SE are "another major contribution to our collective defence, helping Romania and NATO organize exercises and ensuring that NATO troops can deploy here quickly, smoothly and effectively". At the end of the visit at HQ MNC-SE in Sibiu, Admiral Rob Bauer, went to the Joint National Training Centre, in Cincu, to meet with Romanian and multinational troops stationed there.



Major General Sheryl Gordon Alabama National Guard

The Adjutant General of the Alabama National Guard (ALNG), Major General Sheryl Gordon, visited the Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East barracks, in Sibiu, Romania.

Maj. Gen. Gordon learnt about the evolution of HQ MNC-SE within the NATO Force Structure and reassured Maj. Gen. Iacob about the ALNG continuing support in the conduct of the planned exercise Steadfast Jupiter 2023.

The ALNG delegation to Romania pays annual visits as part of the military cooperation and partnership carried out for almost three decades under the auspices of the "State Partnership Program".





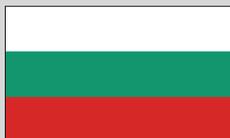
Reflecting on a Remarkable
Year, HQ MNC-SE
Achieved Milestones,
Overcame Challenges,
and Continued to Evolve,
Embodying Growth,
Resilience and Success





Bulgaria

Brigadier General Ivan Ivanov



The military cooperation between the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania is based on a wide range of bilateral agreements, it develops intensively and multi-directionally, and it is characterized by an active military-political dialogue at all levels. The directions and pace of cooperation between the two countries are determined by the joint actions as members of NATO and the EU, by the interest in developing good neighborly relations to achieve common goals for full European and Euro-Atlantic integration and maintaining regional stability and security.

The main trends for the development of military cooperation between Bulgaria and Romania, as outlined by each country's policy in the field of security and defense following the changing security environment in a regional and global aspect, are also reinforced by the commitments to NATO and the EU, the aspiration of both countries to be a regional stabilizing factor, national interests, as well as by the state of the armed forces and the prospects for their development. The two countries aspire to cooperate more actively within the NATO and EU Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) initiatives through interaction on multinational projects in areas of mutual interest.

The Republic of Bulgaria and Romania actively participate in the Southeast European Defense Ministers' Meeting Process (SEDM) and see it as the main regional forum for political dialogue to strengthen trust and security in the region. Bulgaria has joint participation with Romania in SEDM initiatives and in particular in the Southeast Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG). Both countries also engage in the initiatives to develop European military

capabilities within the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) and they also interact closely within the framework of the EU Multinational Tactical Battlegroup (HELBROC) in Greece as a main/lead nation and in the execution of its operational readiness duties.

Within the framework of the NATO summit in Vilnius, the defense ministers of the two countries signed a letter of intent to jointly build a Regional Command of the Special Operations Component (R-SOCC). The command is intended to be an element of the command and control system for NATO's special operations in the Black Sea region. It is expected to reach initial operational capabilities by the end of 2023.

In August 2023, Defence Minister Todor Tagarev met with Romanian National Defence Minister Angel Tîlvăr. They discussed the issues of Black Sea security, regional cooperation and the interaction in the field of defense.

In 2023, formations of the Bulgarian Armed Forces took part in numerous international exercises on the territory of Romania ("JUNCTIONSTRIKE 2023", "SABER GUARDIAN 23", "DACIAN EXPRESS 23", "CETATEA 2023", "DEFENDER EUROPE 2023", "SCORPIONS LEGACY 23", "POSEIDON 2023" and others.). The two countries are also partners in conducting the annual exercises of the Multinational Integrated Logistics Unit for Joint Engineering Support for Logistics (IEL MILU).

A proud Ally, the Republic of Bulgaria shares NATO's key values of individual liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. As a Troop Contributing Nation, Bulgaria currently fills over 20 positions in NATO's international structures in Romania.

With solid historical ties, the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania share their commitment to the fundamental values and the common interests at European, regional and international level and continue building upon their solid cooperation especially in the context of a deteriorated security context due to Russia's brutal and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine.

Canada

Lieutenant Colonel Adam Barsby



With the arrival of a new colleague in August, the Canadian Armed Forces footprint has grown. Canada is now filling several positions throughout the headquarters and doing its part to ensure Full Operational Capability is achieved as planned.

All three of us are appreciative of the opportunity to work and live in Sibiu. Years ago, when we joined the Canadian Armed Forces we did so to serve our country, but also for adventure of seeing the world. Little did any of us know that seeing the world would give us and our families the opportunity to work for NATO in the heart of Transylvania. Until recently, living in Europe for members of Canada's military meant living and visiting Western Europe. Having

the opportunity to explore the rich and diverse culture of Eastern Europe is an opportunity that none of us imagined. Whether we are attending a festival in Piața Mare, trying local delicacies at one of many great restaurants, visiting a fortified church or enjoying the views along the world famous Transfăgărășan highway the opportunities are endless.

As welcoming and wonderful as the region is, we are all in agreement that the highlight of our posting to MNC-SE is the opportunity to work with a diverse group of international colleagues. Each day we come to work it is a professionally enriching experience that will stay with us long after our time in Sibiu comes to an end.

We are very proud to know that the personal and professional friendships we are making here are a part of something special - the start of a long and prosperous cooperation between Canada and Romania.

Croatia

Captain Mihael Pintarić



Starting with becoming a member state of NATO in 2009, the Republic of Croatia has showed its willingness to strengthen the deterrence and defense posture in the Eastern part of the Alliance and amongst the measures taken was to bid for staff positions in the newest corps headquarters in NATO. The decision of joining the Alliance was formally expressed during the Bucharest Summit in 2008. As NATO member states, Croatia and Romania cooperate within the alliance on various security and defense matters. This includes joint military exercises, participation in NATO missions and operations, and contributions to the alliance's collective defense efforts.

The experience gained by the personnel working in multinational structure is going to add value for both me and the Croatian Armed Forces in terms of interoperability and sharing the common values of NATO.

Around a year ago I got an idea to apply and work as a NATO staff officer. Since I worked my entire career in tactical units, it was an advisable step forward. When I discussed such an idea with my wife, we thought we would

end up somewhere in the north of Europe. I was glad when the Croatian military bid for positions in HQ MNC SE in Sibiu.

After a quick research about Romania, I found out that there is a historical Croatian community living in the area of Carasova, in the west of Romania. The relationship between the Republic of Croatia and Romania in that area dates back to the 14th century when the first Croats settled in Banat area. One day, my hope is visit the surroundings and get familiar with the community.

Since my arrival, I found little time to relax. I have been busy solving all the administrative stuff that all internationals have to do, and had to get used to the high tempo of my colleagues. I couldn't understand at the beginning, what FOC is, but now I know. The goal is the Full Operational Capability of HQ MNC SE.

From what I have experienced so far, Sibiu is a great and secure city for families. What I also realized is that Romanian people are much alike the Croatian people, welcoming and full of joy.

It is an honor to be the first Croatian Officer in MNC SE, but also a big responsibility. I am proud to be part of an outstanding organization that is doing its best to keep people in the Alliance secure.

Czech Republic

Major Jana Gallova



To the Czech Republic, Romania is one of the most important partners in South-Eastern Europe and a close and valuable NATO ally. Before becoming a member of the European Union (EU), the Czech Republic openly supported Romania's EU candidacy and actively shared its personal experience, thus boosting trade and economic relations and strengthening ties with the Czech community in Romania.

The bilateral relations are traditionally very good and the Czech Republic and Romania share the same or similar views on international security issues and on a number of important European topics. Moreover, both countries are also full members of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Currently, the Czech Republic contributes to combat groups in Lithuania and Latvia, and also participates in the protection of the Baltic airspace. In terms of capabilities, the most significant contribution is the leadership role in the Alliance's Multinational Battlegroup in Slovakia. According to its current defense minister, Jana Černošková, the Czech Republic is in favour of defence cooperation and agrees with this decision of the allies: "It is good that the allies have agreed to strengthen the alliance presence in the east," she said. Therefore, it was no surprise when the Czech Armed Forces made a commitment to send representatives to Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East (HQ MNC-SE) as an expression

of mutual determination and thus strengthening the Eastern flank of the Alliance due to Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine.

I am Major Jana Gallova, the first Czech officer of the HQ MNC-SE, and I am pleased to share with you my experience during the first year of the 3-year tour of duty at the HQ MNC-SE. The beginnings were really difficult, especially in terms of getting used to different working conditions, a new job, new colleagues, a different living environment and language, and all this far from my family. The first year went by very quickly and I must honestly say that I learned a lot here, especially in terms of planning procedures and the process at the level of a multinational corps. I will be honoured to pass on such experience gained in an international environment to the interested ones, most of all because it makes such a difference in between a 6-month mission and a 3-year mission.

The Embassy of the Czech Republic in Romania works closely with the Czech expatriate community in the Romanian region Banat, which is designated by the Programme for the Support of Czech Cultural Heritage Abroad to maintain their customs and traditions.

Each year of the festival takes place in a different village of the six Czech villages designated, in order to provide support to the local elderly, and at the same time promote the respective village as to become more visible.

I am proud to be part of the wonderful team of professionals at HQ MNC-SE and I can only express my gratitude to be given the opportunity to work and develop in such a unique environment while getting to know this beautiful country which undoubtedly Romania is.

France

Lieutenant Colonel Olivier Rouanet



Together again!

The crucial development of HQ MNC-SE for the deterrence and, if need be, defence of the South-Eastern part of Europe does not only concern the regional countries; it did also bring the utmost interest of France that recently reinforced its contingent with two additional senior officers. Currently fully committed French officers bring their contribution to the development of HQ MNC-SE.

This noticeable support actually complements a much wider effort that France recently dedicated to reinsure and strengthen NATO's deterrent and defensive posture on the Eastern flank.

Actually, from the very first days after Russia's military aggression against Ukraine on, France organized, at short notice, the deployment of the *Mission Aigle* in Romania, which currently comprises a Multinational Battle Group (MNBG), with France as a framework nation, an Air MAMBA detachment

and a national support element. Today, a total of 1350 French soldiers are deployed in Romania.

The *Mission Aigle* major stakeholder, i.e. the Multinational Battle Group (MNBG) - currently manned by French, Belgian and Luxembourg troops located in Cincu camp - may rely on heavy capabilities such as Leclerc tank, VBCI infantry fighting vehicle or Caesar self-propelled gun. Furthermore, the mission Aigle is coordinated by a combined Brigade Forward Command Element (BFCE) already in place in Bucharest. This BFCE is dedicated to increase the presence of troops to Brigade level if necessary and falls under HQ MNC-SE command and control via the NATO chain of command. As a natural consequence, regular multinational exercises with our allies reinforce interoperability with the Romanian counterpart and demonstrate the Battle Group's responsiveness and ability to deploy, on short notice, anywhere on the Romanian border.

After more than 100 years when the French military mission from "Papa Berthelot" went in Romania to train the Romanian Army and fight side with it, the *Mission Aigle's* soldiers together with their Romanian allies are currently writing a new illustrious page of the long-lasting Romanian-French military cooperation.

Germany

Colonel Peter Grundhoff



German and Romanian forces during the last years started to intensify co-operation. Today we maintain strong relationships on Army brigade level and Airforce co-operation especially on the training field. DEU plans to conduct exercises on ROU soil in the near future. So contributing to the workforce of MNC-SE is simply a consequence of consistency.

The German or German-speaking community in Sibiu is surprisingly large and consists of a large number of individual associations and interest groups, which are sometimes networked with one another. It is expected of

a German Officer abroad- and seems appropriate for the German SNR of MNC-SE as well - to get in touch with them and to get involved.

In pursuit of the line of effort "Be a respected member of both NATO and Local Communities" and in close cooperation with the German Consulate in Sibiu, I use existing forums to point out the activities of the headquarters on its way towards Full Operational Capability and to fly the German Army flag. I support study trips for political education to Romania sponsored by the German Ministry of Defense with individual lectures on security policy.

We "internationals" put the M in MNC-SE, so SNRs should be encouraged to act publicly - of course within the limitations that come with our job.

Greece

Brigadier General Anastasios Kolezas



Honouring the Greek Flag at Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East

I would like to start by expressing my gratitude for being given the opportunity to perform my duties at the youngest of NATO's headquarters - Multinational Corps South-East (MNC-SE) in Romania, a country traditionally related with Greece. Stationed in the historical city of Sibiu, in the centre of the picturesque Transylvania region, it will be a pleasure to share my experience so far, as part of a committed team determined to bolster our Alliance's deterrence and defense posture, during this challenging period marked by the Russian invasion in Ukraine.

My country, the Hellenic Republic, has always been consistent with its long-term and steadfast commitment to NATO, thus, proudly, among the first Allied Nations that contributed with personnel to the MNC-SE. My serving - not only as any other soldier, the values of democratic freedom and security that NATO promotes and safeguards, but also as a Flag Officer within the highly committed and professionally excellent NATO structure that is MNC-SE - constitutes a great privilege and, at the same time, a great challenge and responsibility.

Romania is a country to which we, the Greek people, historically feel close because of the common culture and traditions and the long friendship that solidifies the relations between the two nations. The Greek presence in the region dates back in the 7th century B.C., when the first colonies were founded in Dobruja region. In February 1821, the first part of the Greek War of Independence (soon followed by the successful Morea revolution) started from Wallachia. In the years to come, Greek

communities became a strong and respected presence within the early Romanian state, having the same religion as the locals and promoting their expertise as dignitaries, merchants, doctors, scholars, land tenants, etc. A prominent figure of Greek – Romanian origin was Apostol Ursache (Apostolos Arsakis), one of the major benefactors of Greece and a leading political figure in Romania.

Moreover, I feel privileged to be in Sibiu, a city hospitable and widely open to international best practices and values. As the whole Transylvania region, Sibiu, a 900-year old medieval city, offers a unique opportunity for a visitor to enjoy its cultural diversity, developed on a strong sense of community, and the well-preserved customs and traditions. At the same time, it stands as a secure, modern and highly digitalized municipality with great respect for its inhabitants by providing excellent services and facilities. The surrounding virgin nature, the astonishing routes and trails, the great historical sites and museums, the unique gastronomy, the plethora of cultural events, the well-developed public infrastructure, the growing business and market sectors, constitute only a part of its constant evolution and beauty, which it only adds to the openness and kindness of the locals.

Last but not least, I would like to underline the honor that I am being given to be part of the endeavour to "mature" this HQ, in line with a cohesive team of skillful Romanian and Allied professionals. I want to emphasize here the enormous

and well-orchestrated effort assumed by the Framework Nation, Romania, a committed Ally, which has undertaken an unprecedented investment in personnel, resources and infrastructure in order to advance the establishment of this headquarters. The previous period, the genuinely motivated and highly qualified MNC-SE team succeeded to upgrade its functions and procedures, project its role in Romania and Bulgaria, participate in significant training events (exercises LOLE22 and DE23), enhance its Corps level planning expertise and support NATO defense planning process. These achievements paved the way towards the accelerated development as a regionally focused warfighting HQ with the intent to reach the FOC, after a challenging Combat Readiness Evaluation process by the end of this year through participation in the STJU23 exercise.

Unquestionably, the Russian unlawful actions in Ukraine have solidified the immediate and determined NATO response and expedited the stand-up of MNC-SE. Today, I feel proud to represent my national flag and perform my duties during these challenging times within this friendly Romanian environment and among highly professional NATO colleagues. We are all striving to build a cohesive and high readiness NATO HQ that can quickly integrate Allies and partners into our deterrence and defense actions to secure NATO's South-Eastern flank and safeguard the core values and interests of the Alliance.

Italy



Major Francesco Annis

As my first year at Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East (HQ MNC-SE) is almost completed, I am gladly taking the opportunity to reflect on my first experience here at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains.

My posting at this HQ from NATO Rapid Deployable Corps, Italy (NRDC-ITA), located in Solbiate Olona - only a 30-minute drive from Milan, was quite a surprise to me as Romania is not a common destination for Italian military. To honour my commitment, I set my sails and embarked on a wonderful journey with my family.

However, Romania is somehow familiar to me. Romanians form the first foreign community in Italy, totaling more than one million citizens. Interestingly enough, Italians are a recognized minority in Romania. In fact, there were Italian immigrants from the Northern regions of Italy in Romania since the middle of 19th century.

Beside boasting a common Latin identity (similarities in language are just an example) and historically documented contacts (the Roman Empire but also ships and merchants of the Maritime Republics of Venice and Genoa were common sights on the Black Sea coasts), Romania and Italy share the common destiny of countries of frontiers and so, open to the world.

As many Romanians know Italy and Italian people because of working there for years, I am almost immediately recognized as an Italian and I always feel welcome among them. Also,

whenever I go to Italy in my brand new Dacia Duster – a Romanian authentic car brand – with Romanian number plates, I find many Romanians welcoming me. They are generally surprised that I am working in Romania and immediately feel like friends. I always feel at home in their company.

Living in Sibiu, where HQ MNC-SE is located, brought new experiences to my family. We enjoy life in a less chaotic environment (compared to the Milan area) from the pleasure of dining out in the charming historical centre of Sibiu to the crackling of wood burning in my fireplace in winter. Obviously, we miss our friends and relatives in Italy very much. We, Italians, are still "family people". However, we have made a lot of new friends not only Romanians but also from Türkiye, Poland, Bulgaria, France, Canada, Germany, Greece, North Macedonia, Czech Republic, Portugal, and Spain.

Working and living in a multinational and multicultural reality is absolutely great. Having served in NRDC-ITA for six years, I was already aware of the potential of NATO environment. At HQ MNC-SE, we all bring new perspectives, expertise and skills with us from our previous assignments. We get the feeling that together we will achieve great results and that feeling is crucial in successfully facing the challenges of consolidating a "new" HQ. It is also important to recognize the opportunity we are given to avoid failures from the past, and have them leveraging all the new lessons learned.

In this perspective, I am still eager to "pour" in HQ MNC-SE the experience I gained during my past service in NRDC-ITA, looking forward to sharing and learning as much as possible for my future endeavours.

"FORTIS IN UNUM!"

North Macedonia



Major Gjorgji Tasev

Legal framework of cooperation

Agreement on cooperation in the military field, signed on July 27, 1998 in Skopje and then renewed on May 11, 2004 in Bucharest; The Memorandum on cooperation in the field of European and Euro-Atlantic integration between the MFA of North Macedonia and Romania, signed on February 23, 2011, Bucharest.

Regional and multilateral cooperation

Both countries are part/members of: SEDM – South East Defense Ministerial and SEEBRIG (South East Europe Brigade), Balkan Countries CHODs Conference on Military Cooperation and RACVIAC .

NATO

Romania was strong partner and supporter of North Macedonia on its way of becoming member of the Alliance. North Macedonia became a NATO member on March 27th, 2020, after the Accession Protocol of the Republic of North Macedonia joining NATO was ratified in the Romanian Senate on March 13, 2019 which once again reaffirmed the strong relationship between the countries.

In May 2021, MKD Army CHOD, General Gjurchinovski informed the ROU CHOD, General Petrescu of the decision for accepting to send staff officers to MNC-SE (Multinational Corps South-East), with the possibility of increased participation in the future.

This opened the door and I applied for this position and eventually have been selected to join the HQ MNC-SE.

I have been working in HQ MNC-SE for 7 months now. Different background and experience of every staff member is a unique experience while working in a multinational environment. We are strong team, because it derives from our differences. Living in Romania and city of Sibiu are just adding more cultural value on this journey.

MNC-SE is a learning environment that steer its member's professional development through different activities such as Training and Exercises. Valuable experience is gained and lessons are learned while dealing various challenges during performing regular daily job activities.

As one on the latest NATO member's countries, my goal after finishing my tour here is to share my knowledge and accumulated experience when back home.

North Macedonia is an integral part of the collective deterrence and defense system and currently participate with platoon size element in ROU BG led by France as a part of "Enhance Vigilance Activity (eVA) since November 2022.

Portugal



Lieutenant Colonel Rui Carvalho

Introduction

The diplomatic relations between the Portuguese Republic and Romania date back to 1917, stable and friendly as the two countries have had numerous connections throughout history. The most recent evidence is the Defence Cooperation Agreement between the Governments of Romania and Portuguese Republic, signed by the two defence ministers that will contribute both to the increase of defence bilateral cooperation and the strengthening of collaboration within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). Both nations are members of the Council of Europe, European Union, NATO and the United Nations (UN). Moreover, Portugal is a founding member of NATO (1949), integrating its missions and structure, an indispensable partner within the Alliance.

The participation of Portuguese Deployed National Forces (DNF) in International missions reflects the materialization of national interests within the scope of the commitments assumed with the organizations that Portugal is part of, namely NATO, EU, and UN, also as bilateral or multilateral framework, with allied and friendly countries.

The presence of Portuguese military forces in various Theaters of Operations (TO) abroad, embodies the political orientation which seeks to guarantee commitment and solidarity with the security and defense of NATO's strategic space. In this sense, within the scope of tailored Forward Presence (tFP), the participation of National Forces (NF) and Elements deployed in Romania began in 2017, and the current commitment consists of a National Contingent (NC) with two DNF, one within the framework of NATO's enhanced Vigilance Activities (eVA) and another at the bilateral level.

In this context, the purpose of this article is to present the current participation of DNF and Elements in Romania, briefly describing their organization and mission.

National Forces (NF) and Elements deployed in Romania

Background. Within the scope of tFP which materializes the deployment of multinational forces to the southeastern flank of Alliance's territory, the Portuguese contribution in Romania TO started in 2017 with the participation of Deployed National Elements (DNE) of up to four military personnel, in the Multinational Division Southeast (MND-SE), in Bucharest, and in the Multinational Brigade Southeast (MNBde-SE), in Craiova.

Within the same framework, the 2nd Mechanized Infantry Battalion (2BIMecRodas), headquartered at the 14th Infantry Regiment, in Viseu, Portugal, since 2018, has been affiliated to the MNBde-SE and has participated in exercises of this Brigade, namely the SCORPIONS FURY 18, SCORPIONS LEGACY (SCLE) 19, SCLE 21, SCLE 22. In 2021, the participation of an Army Company Unit within the scope of the tFP was approved in order to integrate a Battalion of the MNBde-SE for a period of three months, highlighting its participation in the exercise SCLE 21. By far, the current year's exercise DACIAN LANCER 23 is the most important training opportunity.

Final considerations

The presence of DNE in the different multinational NATO structures existing in Romania translates into added value in terms of learning and professional integration in a multinational environment for the Portuguese military elements from Brigade to Corps level, also allowing facilitation of liaison and interoperability between the different levels and the Portuguese forces.

The participation of the Special Operations NF in bilateral and multilateral training activities, in addition to enabling the sharing of experience and the validation

of interoperability with similar allied Forces, which translates into gains in relation to a possible employment, also contributes to compliance of the international commitments undertaken by Portugal as a member state of the Atlantic Alliance.

It should be noted that the good achievements obtained as a result of all these activities, which, in addition to giving prestige to Portugal and the Portuguese Armed Forces, as well as contribute to establishing our country as a reliable partner that promotes stability in the world.

To conclude, the participation of the Portuguese Armed Forces in multiple international missions, including Romania, demonstrates the guarantee of Portugal's commitment and solidarity with the security and defense of NATO's strategic space, as an active contributor to world Security and Peace. The six years of affiliation of the 2nd Mechanized Infantry Battalion (2BIMecRodas) to MNBde-SE, as well as the current framework of forces permanently present in Romania since April 15, 2022 demonstrate that the Portuguese Armed Forces are a credible partner, of high readiness and competence, making an indelible contribution to strengthening bilateral military relations between Portugal and Romania.

Spain

Lieutenant Colonel Luis Carreras



Romanians are proud of their country and their flag, and you can see it just by walking the streets. They also enjoy doing everything possible to make you feel at home as a visiting foreign tourist. This is what my family and I, as an international military of Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East located in the beautiful city Sibiu, Romania, first noticed when we landed on these grounds.

As a Spaniard, I have to say that it is easy for me to notice this affection coming from a country like Spain which welcomes millions of tourists every year. We could find its explanation in the Ancient Age as both countries, Dacia and Hispania which, although on opposite sides of the European continent, were Roman provinces with modern Spanish and Romanian languages originating from the Latin language. Both nations are members of the Council of Europe, European Union, NATO and the United Nations. As a matter of fact, the first direct Spanish - Romanian relations actually occurred during the 15th century between King Alfonso V of Aragon and King Juan Hunyadi

of Transylvania when they signed a cooperation treaty. Another milestone in our history is that on April 12th, 1880, Spain recognized the independence of Romania in the aftermath of the Russo - Turkish War.

After the Romanian Revolution of 1989, bilateral relations between the two countries have improved. Spain supported Romania's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 2004 and to the European Union (EU) in 2007. In June 2016, Romania and Spain celebrated 135 years of diplomatic relations. The best proof of these good relations is that Spain is ranked as the best valued country among the Romanian population.

After joining the Alliance on May 30th, 1982, Spain fully participated in the political structures of the Organization. The country's participation in the integrated military command structure was endorsed in 1996 at the same time with Dr Javier Solana's nomination as NATO's first Spanish Secretary General (1995-1999).

Meanwhile, Spain and Romania enjoy the friendship between our peoples, our Latin cultural and linguistic ties and the 141 years of diplomatic relations that unite us.

Türkiye

Major General Abdullah Soydemir



Türkiye and Romania have strong political, economic, military and cultural ties rooted in history. The mutual cooperation between countries maintained within the framework of close dialogues and friendship relations at the highest level and multi domains. Türkiye and Romania are two of NATO's geo-strategically important countries in the southeastern region of Europe.

Türkiye and Romania are proud of being members of Southeastern Europe Defense Ministerial Process (SEDM) which was launched in 1996 with the aim of improving cooperation among regional countries and enhancing security and stability in Southeastern Europe and has maintained its regional and international importance and visibility up to today.

We also contribute together with Romania to SEDM initiative, the South Eastern Europe Brigade (SEBRIG), which was established to support peace keeping and humanitarian aid operations conducted by NATO in Southeastern Europe.

The Montreux Convention, which is the essential element in the context of Black Sea security and stability, has been properly and impartially implemented by Türkiye for more than eight decades. In this regard, the successful implementation of the Montreux Convention since 1936 is a testimony of the balance in Black Sea Region of southeastern Europe and contributing directly to the security of regional and other NATO member countries.

Moreover, Turkish Naval Forces launched Operation Black Sea Harmony on 1 March 2004 with the aim of deterring terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and other possible illegal activities in the Black Sea. Romania has joined the operation in 2006 which added to bilateral cooperation regarding security of the region.

Friendly relations between Türkiye and Romania have gradually increased and consequently, the Strategic Partnership Document was signed between the two countries in December 2011, elevating our relations to the level of strategic partnership. Yearly meetings are conducted at MFA level.

Our partnership in the military domain continues to increase day by day. As soon as the establishment of NATO entities in Romania, Türkiye has eagerly participated in HQ MND-SE/Bucharest with two officers, NFIU Romania/Bucharest with one officer, HQ MNC-SE/Sibiu with one two-star general as DCOM and three more personnel (2 officer, 1 NCO).

The two countries participated together in DEFENDER EUROPE 2021 exercise as part of NATO's Partnership for Peace, which was also the certification of HQ MNC-SE in terms of Initial Operational Capability. In this exercise, NRDC-TÜR assumed the role of NATO Response Force Land Component Command. During the execution phase of the exercise in 10-14 June 2021, the Turkish 66th Mechanized Infantry Brigade Command assumed the role of "Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) and with full operational personnel and equipment, deployed to Cincu.

During the exercise Loyal Leda 2022, COS LANDCOM Lt.Gen. Mustafa OĞUZ visited Sibiu twice in 2022 to mentor, support and evaluate HQ MNC-SE preparations. After the accomplishment of I-FOC, he also attended certification ceremony in Sibiu and shared our HQ's rightful pride.

Furthermore, to support FOC preparations, COM NRDC-TÜR Lt.Gen. Levent ERGÜN assumed role in CREVAL and visited HQ MNC-SE in 2023.

Apart from above visits done by high ranking Turkish Military personnel, Republic of Türkiye Ambassador, Özgür Kıvanç ALTAN also paid a visit to our COM MNC-SE in 2023 to express his sincere regards and wishes towards the achievement of the upcoming challenges.

Türkiye is keen to develop her military relations further with Romania in NATO Allied Defense Structure. With this regard, in 2023 Plenary Meeting, Türkiye proposed to affiliate its 3rd Armored Brigade/Tekirdağ to MNC-SE in order to conduct training and exercise activities with HQ MNC-SE starting with 2024.

As Türkiye's representatives of this youngest but one of the most committed NATO HQ, we are honored to contribute MNC-SE's endeavors towards FOC and proud to fly our flag in HQ MNC-SE with the motto, "FORTIS in UNUM".







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