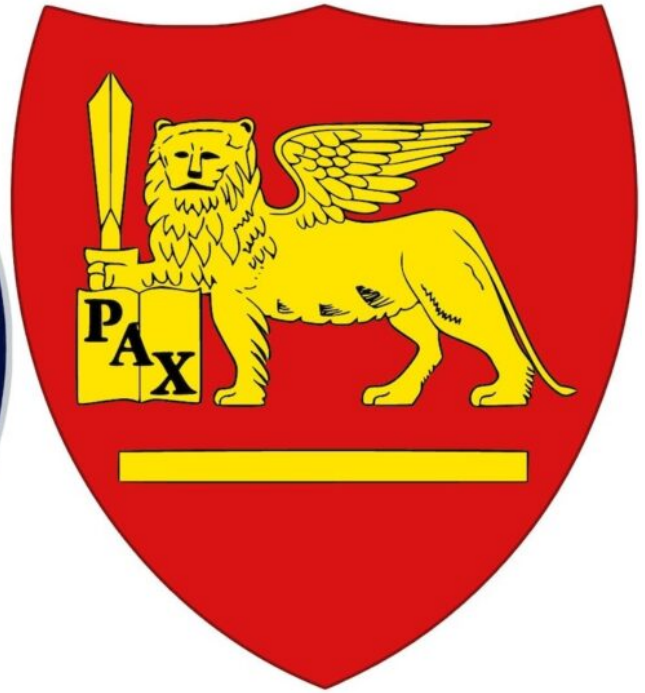


Black Sea Maritime Forum kicks off in Bucharest



By U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa Public Affairs

BUCHAREST, Romania – The third convening of the Black Sea Maritime Forum, cohosted by Romanian Naval Forces, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa and Allied Joint Force Command Naples, Italy, began April 4 in Bucharest, Romania.

“Maritime security within the Black Sea is a shared interest among NATO allies and partner nations,” said Adm. Stuart B. Munsch, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa and Allied Joint Force Naples, Italy. “The free flow of commerce on this important waterway is vital to Black Sea countries and supports global economic prosperity. The U.S. Navy, alongside our NATO Allies and partners, is committed to promoting a secure, prosperous, and interconnected Black Sea region that

is free from threats to territorial integrity and from economic coercion – this conference speaks to our commitment.”

This year’s forum will be attended by representatives from Bulgaria, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Japan, Romania, Sweden, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, the United States, as well as delegates from NATO navies and partner nations.

“A multi-institutional event, the Black Sea Maritime Forum represents an excellent opportunity to build bridges between the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and the Baltic Sea.” said Vice Admiral Mihai Panait, commander of the Romanian Naval Forces. “We have to continue working together and share our experience in order to improve our knowledge regarding the strategic context, risks and threats specific to the Black Sea region and draw some conclusions concerning to reduce vulnerabilities and increase resilience.”

To facilitate dialogue, panels addressed the Black Sea’s role in the global economy and energy sectors, and Black Sea maritime security cooperation.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the NATO Alliance, the world’s most successful alliance, recently expanding to 32 Nations through the accession of Sweden.

Allied Joint Force Command (JFC) Naples was activated on 15 March 2004, when its predecessor command, Allied Forces Southern Europe (AFSOUTH), was deactivated after nearly 53 years of successful activity in support of peace and stability in and around its designated area of responsibility. Twenty-two NATO nations contribute to the JFC Naples military staff in order to deter aggression and to contribute to the effective defense of NATO territory and forces and to preserve or restore the security of NATO nations.

U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa is actively involved in maintaining security throughout the region. NAVEUR-NAVAF and

U.S. 6th Fleet routinely conduct exercises with Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Türkiye, Ukraine, and other Black Sea partner nations, training maritime readiness and increasing interoperability capabilities. Commander, Task Force 68 routinely works with Allied and partner nations to construct logistics infrastructure, while training and exercising demining techniques throughout the region. Commander, Task Force 67's deploys maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft, the P-8 Poseidon, to conduct patrols over the Black Sea and surrounding region.

For over 80 years, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) has forged strategic relationships with allies and partners, leveraging a foundation of shared values to preserve security and stability.

Headquartered in Naples, Italy, NAVEUR-NAVAF operates U.S. naval forces in the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) areas of responsibility. U.S. Sixth Fleet is permanently assigned to NAVEUR-NAVAF, and employs maritime forces through the full spectrum of joint and naval operations.