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ROMANIAN MILITARY NEWSLETTER

Informal Reunion of the EU Defence Ministers in Bucharest

Special points of interests:

- Informal Reunion of the EU Defence Ministers in Bucharest
- Bilateral meetings of the defence minister during the second day of the Informal Meeting of the EU Defence Ministers
- A delegation of Romania's Government met with the NATO Secretary General, at Brussels
- EU Defence Political Directors Meeting in Bucharest
- Transfer of authority between the Polish contingents, at Craiova



The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini and the Minister of National Defence, Gabriel Leş

The Informal Reunion of the EU Defence Ministers took place over 30-31 January, 2019, in the context of Romania's holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Council. The event was organized at the Royal Palace and the Palace of Parliament, in Bucharest.

The Informal Reunion was chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, and hosted by the Minister of National Defence, Gabriel Leş. NATO's Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, and the UN Deputy Secretary General for Peace-keeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, were invited to participate in the reunion.

On 30 January, at the MoND headquarters, Defence Minister Gabriel Leş had bilateral meetings with the UN Under Secretary General for

February 7th, 2019

Issue no. 1

Pag. 2

Peace-keeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and the Chief Executive of the European Defence Agency, Jorge Domecq.

The meetings were part of the Informal Meeting of the EU Defence Ministers, which took place in Bucharest over 30-31 January, in the context of Romania's holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The Minister of National Defence officially thanked the UN official for his participation in the reunion and restated our country's commitment to working in close cooperation with international organizations it is part of- UN, NATO and the European Union. "Romania is fully committed to support peaceful solutions to all crises the international community is facing nowadays, such as it has done for the last 27 years, when it has been contributing with troops in the missions conducted under the aegis of the UN. Since 1991 up to present, almost 10,000 Romanian soldiers have taken part in such 25 missions, in various areas worldwide", Gabriel Leş emphasized.

Also, the defence minister stated that Romania was previously a non-permanent member in the UN Security Council for four mandates and that it submitted its candidature for a new mandate for the 2020-2021 timeframe.

In this context, the Romanian official reminded that our country would continue to contribute to the international peace-keeping efforts, "an important example in this respect being Romanian Armed Forces' participation with an airlift helicopter detachment to MINUSMA Operation, from Mali, starting October 2019".

At the end of the meeting with the UN official, defence minister restated that Romania, while holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU, would support the reinforcement of the EU-UN strategic partnership on peace operations and crisis management.

The second bilateral meeting between minister Leş and Chief Executive Domecq, focused on the collaboration between Romania and the European Defence Agency. "We are aware that the EDA, will hold an important role in the current context, focused on the consolidation of the EU's role on security and defence, in full coordination with NATO", minister of national defence added.

The two officials exchanged opinions on the development perspectives of the Common Defence and Security Policy, with focus on ensuring coherence in all the initiatives that have been launched in the last couple of years (PESCO, CARD, EDF). Also, the major responsibilities brought along by Romania's Presidency of the Council of EU in the field of security and defence as well as the events co-organized with the EDA in the near future, in Bucharest.

Bilateral meetings of the defence minister during the second day of the Informal Meeting of the EU Defence Ministers

On Thursday, 31 January, on the second day of the Informal Meeting of the EU Defence Ministers, Defence Minister Gabriel Leş had bilateral meetings with the defence ministers from Italy, France and Greece.

The talks with the Italian counterpart, Elisabetta Trenta, focused on identifying ways of developing military cooperation both at bilateral level, within the Strategic Partnership between the two states and within the North-Atlantic Alliance.

Minister Leş expressed his appreciation for Italy's contribution to the implementation of the reassurance measures on the Eastern flank of the Alliance, within the tFP, by assuming certain staff positions within the Multinational Brigade South-East and restated our country's interest in hosting an-army corps level ground command and control component (Multinational Corps South-East – MNC-SE).

The Italian minister thanked his Romanian counterpart for the solid contribution brought by the personnel manning positions within allied structures hosted by Italy as well as for the excellent cooperation during the allied operations conducted in Afghanistan, Western Balkans and Iraq.

The series of meetings continues with the meeting between defence minister Leş and the French defence minister, Florence Parly, when the two officials approached topics referring to the development of bilateral cooperation in the defence area and priorities on NATO and EU agenda.

Following Romania's assuming the Presidency of the Council of the EU, the two officials analyzed the main challenges posed to the Union but also priority subjects included in the European project in the defence field. The two officials emphasized the common interest with respect to the consolidation of the EU cooperation projects, especially the CSDP ones and PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation), EDF



Bilateral meeting between Defence Minister Leş and his Italian counterpart, Elisabetta Trenta

(European Defence Fund) and CARD initiatives (Coordinated Annual review on Defence). With regard to CARD, following the taking over of the Presidency of the Council of the EU on a rotational basis, in the first semester of 2019, Romania will organize, together with EDA, a workshop dedicated to the development of the methodology of this initiative meant to support the member states in providing the critical capabilities.

Also, defence minister met with the Chief of the Hellenic National Defence General Staff, Evangelos Apostolakis, and approached subjects referring to the modernization and equipping of the two armed forces and evaluated ways of enhancing cooperation between the two states in the field of defence.

In this context, minister Leş appreciated that the new cooperation in the field of defence, signed in 2018, represented a step forward with regard to the development of the relations between the two countries and offered new perspectives on the cooperation in the naval, cyber defence and military mobility fields.

Also, the Romanian minister invited his Hellenic counterpart to participate in the conference entitled “The Black Sea and Balkans Security Forum 2019”, which will be organized in June, this year, in Bucharest.

A delegation of Romania’s Government met with the NATO Secretary General, at Brussels

A delegation of Romania’s Government headed by Prime-Minister Viorica Dăncilă, among the members being Defence Minister Gabriel Leş, met with NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, today, January 23rd, at Brussels.

The agenda of the talks consisted in topics of utmost importance for the North-Atlantic Alliance, such as the evolution of the security in the Black Sea region, and the implementation of the allied decisions with respect to the strengthening of the defence and deterrence posture but also the commitments assumed by the allied states with respect to the 3 C concept– cash, capabilities, contribution.



Meeting between the Romanian delegation and NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg

Defence Minister Gabriel Leş emphasized the need to increase the maritime presence of the Standing NATO Maritime forces in the Black Sea by setting up a solid Allied ground presence in Romania with the view of discouraging and defending the allied territory, an enforced Allied naval presence but also by filling the shortfalls in an enhanced Air Policing missions.

Also, the minister highlighted the importance of completing NATO's command and control architecture, by establishing the multinational land command and control HQ connected to the Joint Force Command Naples, continuing consultations with Georgia and Ukraine on the Black Sea security as well as developing regional cooperation against hybrid threats. "The Alliance's long-term strategy should develop a structured approach on the region, as part of a detailed evaluation of Russia's posture", stated minister Gabriel Leş.

When referring to the Allied deterrence and defence posture, the minister of national defence reiterated the fact that the implementation of the tailored Forward Presence (tFP) remains a priority for our country, emphasizing the need to increase contributions of the Allied member states with forces to the Multinational Brigade South-East Craiova.

At the end of the meeting, minister Leş restated our country's commitment in respecting the 3 C principle- Cash, by continuing allocating 2% of the GDP for defence; Capabilities, by allocating 35% from the budget defence for equipment procurement, modernization of the existing ones and for research & development activities; Contribution, by restating the commitment to support NATO's efforts in countering terrorism by participating within the Coalition-type mission as well as in the new NATO Mission in Iraq.

"For 2019, we have pledged to further increase our contribution to Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan to more than 800 troops, by deploying military police personnel, advisors and personnel that can provide for the force protection", defence minister concluded.

EU Defence Political Directors Meeting in Bucharest

The meeting of the political directors of the ministries of defense of the Member States of the European Union was held in Bucharest on 17 and 18 January, in the context of Romania's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The agenda of the talks covered important topics related to the security and defence of the European Union, including cooperation between the EU and NATO, particularly in the framework of joint exercises, the future of European defence, and the developments and perspectives of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

Thus, on the first day of the meeting, representatives of the Member States, together with EU officials and representatives of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), discussed the lessons learned from the EU HEX-ML 18 crisis management exercise (PACE) - held last year, and considered the possibility of improving European crisis response mechanisms, as well as strengthening EU-NATO cooperation in general and, during exercises, in particular.

February 7th, 2019

Issue no. 1

Pag. 6

The second day of the meeting was dedicated to the future of European defence, discussing the progress achieved in 2018 and aimed at analyzing options for the increase of the EU's ability to act as a security provider and to enhance the EU's strategic autonomy. In this context, European officials discussed the coherent and coordinated implementation of initiatives launched under the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), including Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the Annual Coordination Review Process (CARD) and the European Defense Fund (EDF).

A special work session was dedicated to PESCO, in which the political directors had an exchange of views on the processes for identifying, evaluating and selecting projects under the aegis of Permanent Structured Cooperation.

The meeting in Bucharest - attended by representatives of the 28 EU Member States, the European External Action Service, the European Defense Agency, the European Commission and NATO - was a good opportunity to prepare the EU's Informal Meeting of the Defence Ministers, which will occur on the 30th and 31st of January at the Palace of Parliament in Bucharest.

Transfer of authority between the Polish contingents, at Craiova

The ceremony occasioned by the transfer of authority between the third and fourth rotations of the Polish contingents (as part of the Multinational Brigade South-East) that were to be deployed to Romania for six months took place on Tuesday, January 15, at the 26 Infantry Battalion "Neagoe Basarab" Headquarters from Craiova.

The Polish Contingent is part of the joint initiative, having the mission to contribute to the tailored Forward Presence in the South-Eastern Alliance, in accordance with the measures adopted within the Warsaw NATO Summit.

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Poland participates with a contingent made up of 225 soldiers and 47 pieces of equipment operated by the 26 Infantry Battalion "Neagoe Basarab", as part of the Multinational Brigade South-East, thus, materializing the commitments assumed by Romania and Poland during the Warsaw NATO Summit.

The Polish soldiers will train together with their colleagues from the Multinational Brigade South-East, as part of the Allied tailored Forward Presence.