



# JANDARMERIA ROMÂNĂ

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# JANDARMERIA ROMÂNĂ

*The authors are fully responsible for the  
opinions/views expressed in this magazine.*

## TRANSLATION BY

Second lieutenant G.Francesca CONSTANTIN ALBU  
Second lieutenant Andreea MIRA

## EDITORIAL OFFICE

Lieutenant-colonel Casandra ILIE  
Second lieutenant G. Francesca CONSTANTIN ALBU  
Second lieutenant Andreea MIRA  
NCO Nicoleta SANDU  
NCO Andra CIOBANU  
NCO Daniel LUPU

Member of  
ELEMENT Network







# editorial

## 174 years. The Gendarmerie moves forward.

**A**pril 3, 1850, is the milestone to which we return with each passing year in the history of the Romanian Gendarmerie. And here we are now, in 2024, facing 174 years since the gendarmes have been fulfilling their mission to serve the citizens, to uphold public order and safety, democracy, and fundamental rights and freedoms.

A retrospective look at the long history of this institution reveals not just a succession of events and changes, but also a chronology of its resilience and adaptability in the face of the challenges of an ever-changing world. From the “Legislation for the reform of the Corps of Servants in the Gendarmes,” signed by Prince Grigore Alexandru Ghica, which marks the establishment of the Romanian Gendarmerie as a force, to the complex missions carried out with the help of the most sophisticated technologies of the present, the Romanian Gendarmerie has evolved and adapted continuously to the times, diversifying its role and responsibilities according to the changes and needs of society.

The long tradition of the institution, incorporated into its fundamental values and principles, represents the solid foundation to which we constantly refer and which legitimizes our mission. Discipline, integrity, and loyalty are just a few of the elements that have always defined the activity of the gendarmes, regardless of the historical context or the challenges faced.

This tradition of excellence and professionalism has been passed down from generation to generation, contributing to the consolidation of the respect and trust that the Romanian Gendarmerie has gained over time.

In addition to tradition, the evolution of the institution has also been marked by adaptation to changes in society. In an increasingly interconnected and technologized world, gendarmes had to expand their skills and improve their ability to respond to new challenges. Thus, we have adopted programs of continuous training and specialization, implemented modern communication and surveillance technologies, and collaboration with other institutions and organizations has become an integral part of our daily activities.

As we reflect on the 174 years of existence of the Romanian Gendarmerie, we must acknowledge that the most significant contribution to the evolution of the institution is that of the people who represent this force; they are the true anonymous heroes who carry the history of the Gendarmerie forward.

Therefore, now, on this anniversary moment, I want to convey a big THANK YOU for the effort and dedication of all Romanian gendarmes everywhere! Only through you will the Romanian Gendarmerie continue to move forward!

**Brigadier General Alin MASTAN**  
General Inspector of the Romanian Gendarmerie

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# For the first time in the history of the Romanian Gendarmerie, the title “Honorary Gendarme of the Year” was awarded to a woman: NCO Andrada Văideanu

Second lieutenant Andreea MIRA

**D**uring the festive activities celebrating the 174th anniversary of the establishment of the Romanian Gendarmerie, a ceremony was held to award gendarmes who have distinguished themselves professionally with outstanding merits. This year’s big surprise was that the distinction “Honorary Gendarme of the Year” was awarded, for the first time, to a woman - our colleague, Andrada Văideanu, from the Mobile Detachment of Baia Mare within the Maramureş County Gendarmerie Inspectorate.

Andrada was rewarded for her major contribution in March, when, during a mission related to a supermarket theft, aided by her feminine intuition, she managed to identify a pedophile who had been having sexual relations with the three minors accompanying him at that time. Our colleague said that in this particular case, her experience of over 19 years in public order helped a lot, as well as the fact that, being a mother of three children, she felt the danger of the situation.

As we wanted to know Andrada better and find out how she felt when she received the distinction of “Honorary Gendarme of the Year,” we invited her for a short interview.



**1** *When you were a child, what did you want to become when you grew up, what profession fascinated you?*

Sometimes it feels like just yesterday I was a child! I could say that I did not have a rapid transition from childhood to adulthood, easily anticipating, even back then, my future profession. I felt in my element when I made carbines from Bergman pipes, parachutes from chestnuts, or mud bombs.

**2** *What made you choose Gendarmerie as your profession?*

Already having a military member in the family, my father, I tried to follow the benefits that the system offered at that time, job security, and not least, the emotion felt when the national anthem was played, an emotion experienced every time I was on the podium or at the start of the educational program in middle and high school.

**3** *What has been your journey in the Romanian Gendarmerie?*

Since 2005, I have been part of the 1st Mobile Gendarme Detachment of Baia Mare. During all this time, I tried to stay up to date with legislative changes through individual study, helping when needed for public order missions in courtrooms, and during my maternity leave, offering support in the Legal and Contraventions Department. In the Mobile Detachment, besides the basic missions, I also manage the entire inventory of materials and weapons of the subunit, while also handling the electronic aspects of the operational situation.

From my hiring until 2010, I participated with the Romanian Gendarmerie team in various sports branches such as Orienteering, Alpine Skiing, Athletics (especially endurance events), often achieving top places both individually and as a team.

**4** In 2004, I started the Faculty of Journalism, but after being hired, I chose to give it up, later obtaining my degree in Law and Public Administration in 2009. Surprised by the passing of time and the accumulation of duties and responsibilities in private life, I considered that my presence within the Subunit was both sufficient and efficient.

**4** *What were the biggest challenges you faced throughout your career as a gendarme?*

I do not recall any event that has impacted me in the long term; I must also admit that I have never known fear, although working on the street is unpredictable, especially considering the prejudice about female vulnerability from those we interacted with most often.

By working hard on the intellectual-emotional part, over time, I inhibited frustrations and tried to remain balanced even in the most delicate cases.

**5** *What is the most emotional/unusual experience you have encountered in your profession?*

Besides receiving the title “The Honorary Gendarme of the Year”, that caused profound and incomparable emotions with anything else I have experienced professionally, I felt the maximum adrenaline in two situations, many years ago when, together with the other crew members, we went to a notorious area during a large-scale night scandal, surrounded by over 50 Roma citizens throwing not only stones but also agricultural tools at us, alongside countless uneducated expressions directed at us, a situation that ended gloriously for us.

**I am glad to experience equality in rights; I also consider that everyone has their place in society, especially in this profession...**





The second situation was during a flagrant crime (home theft), when I, along with the male police colleagues (I being the only gendarme in the two teams), managed to identify all members of the group, consisting of both women and men, each with their role, managing to work together and to uncover them.

*How do you think we could attract more women to the profession of gendarme?*

I am glad to experience equality in rights; I also consider that everyone has their place in society, especially in this profession, which until recently was predominantly male. For the efficiency of the team, a bit of feminine flair and kind words combined with a masculine attitude leads to invincibility, just like in a family where it takes two to make things work optimally.

*Recently you had a significant contribution to identifying a pedophile, what can you tell us about this case, how did things go, and how did you realize the man was hiding something much more serious?*

It was easy for me to notice that something exceeded the limits of normality; the subliminal messages sent not only by him but also by the minor whose name was tattooed on his arm, the fact that they were not relatives, the large age difference for a friendship relationship, all these were a combination of signals that encouraged me to apply everything I knew from experience, feelings, and psychological books to steer him in the direction I wanted, to confess and provide enough elements to confirm what I already suspected.

*What qualities should a good professional in this Arm have?*

Not just listening but also speaking, being convinced that attitude can change situations, making the right decision thinking ahead, not under the impulse of the moment, being human and responsible at the same time, and not least, always staying up to date with any changes in the field, following the idea that ignorance does not absolve you from responsibility.

By adhering to this belief, you can identify yourself as a good professional.

*On the occasion of Romanian Gendarmerie Day, you received the distinction "Honorary Gendarme of the Year," awarded for the first time to a female gendarme. How did you feel about this experience, and what does this title mean to you?*

Although I am not an emotional person, the experience of such a significant title made me associate the intensity of the emotion with the moment I became a mother, feeling extremely honored, especially since I am the first woman in the history of the Romanian Gendarmerie to receive this high distinction. The emotion was multiplied, and I appreciated the feelings of the moment as unique in the professional life.

The entire mix of thoughts and emotions experienced on this occasion will motivate me even more to perform my duties correctly.

Being aware that it is a unique opportunity in a military career to obtain such a distinction makes me realize that it was a real privilege to be the one chosen from so many dedicated, prepared, and specialized comrades in various fields.





*You have three children, how do they see the profession of gendarme, and how do they feel about their mother being a gendarme?*

Although they often see this profession as a sacrifice due to the significant time spent at work, including night shifts, holidays, or school

celebrations we sometimes miss, unexpected missions, and perhaps the discipline and classic conduct we implement, they feel not only safe with both gendarme parents but also proud, especially now when the subject of the “Gendarme of the Year” distinction was widely spread in the media, on social platforms, and among acquaintances, with almost entirely positive feedback.

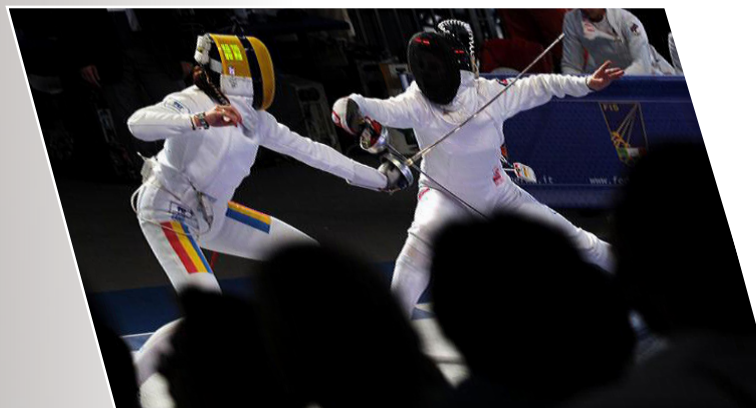


*What would be the most important advice you would give to young people who wish to embrace a career as a gendarme?*

Seek to surpass themselves each time, stay connected to their principles, and not deviate from individual study out of personal conviction, not for material rewards, but for the significant contribution they can make to improving the lives of the next generation.



# SIGNIFICANT THOUGHTS



# Ana-Maria BRÂNZĂ

made by Andreea MIRA

# interview

*Born on November 26, 1984, in Bucharest, Ana Maria Brânză is a former épée fencer. She was an Olympic silver medalist at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing and the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, an Olympic team champion at the 2016 edition in Rio de Janeiro, a three-time world champion (2019 individually and 2010 and 2011 in teams), and a seven-time European champion (2013 individually and 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2014 and 2015 in teams).*

*Throughout her career, she won 14 World Cup tournaments and was named the best épée fencer in the world in the 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2012-2013, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 seasons.*

*Additionally, she is a volunteer for the Association for Therapeutic Intervention in Autism and the initiator of the humanitarian project "Run on Your Birthday."*







interview

*Dorim să vă mulțumim pentru timpul acordat și amabilitatea de a accepta să ne răspundeți la câteva întrebări.*

**1.** *What did you want to become when you were a child? Did you ever dream of a career other than a sports one?*

Since childhood, I differed from my friends who wanted to become firefighters, doctors or lawyers. I didn't have any plans in that direction, but after visiting the fencing hall and a few months of training, I realized that "when I grow up, I want to become a champion." I believed in this for over 20 years of my sports career and never strayed from the path, and I'm convinced that I wouldn't have succeeded in any other field at the same level as I did in high-performance sports.

**2.** *Where did the passion for fencing come from? Who or what inspired you for this sport?*

My parents initially wanted my brother and me to do sports, not necessarily for performance, but for the benefits that physical activity brings to children's development and education. They initially chose tennis for me, but it wasn't suitable, and I gave it up a year later. Later, my brother discovered the fencing hall and suggested I visit, as he was playing soccer at CSA Steaua at the time. Although I knew nothing about foils, epees, and sabers, I was curious enough to step into that hall and later be captivated by the white costumes and the athletes dueling. I am grateful to my brother, Marius, for this, and to my parents who supported me on this path and invested their trust in me.

**3.** *For most of us, childhood is a time of play and carefree living. How did you manage, as a child, to channel your energy and efforts into high-performance sports? What was the main motivation?*

For me, sports have always been a game, and the fencing hall the most beautiful playground for many years. True, I played by strict rules from the beginning, and over time the pressure of results intervened, but I only succeeded when I kept my playful spirit. I was never the athlete who felt that I sacrificed my childhood on the altar of performance.

**5.** *You're left-handed, and this influenced your career from the beginning because, for example, you had to choose the saber instead of the foil. Do you consider using your left hand an advantage in your career, or would your path have been different if you were right-handed?*

During my junior years, I had this belief that being left-handed was a huge advantage, and it helped me tremendously. But during my senior years, I noticed that it was just a self-motivation mechanism and nothing more. The only assets in high-performance sports are continuous work, ambition, dedication, and determination.



**4.** *How did a typical training day go, what was the routine and rigors?*

Although high-performance sports mean a lot of routine, it's up to each athlete how they dose their enthusiasm for each training session. Training days varied greatly depending on the period we were in, but for years, the two daily training sessions were a constant in my routine. Whether it was physical training, technical-tactical preparation, or psychological preparation, my days were always focused on what I could constantly improve to achieve my goals.

**6.** *What was the feeling when you represented Romania for the first time as an athlete? And when you stepped onto the highest step of the podium for the first time?*

The moment I stepped onto a real podium for the first time, at the U17 World Championships in 2001, wearing Romania's tracksuit and listening to the anthem from the top step of the podium, was the moment I received confirmation that I had chosen well to go down the path of performance, and I promised myself then that I would do everything in my power to return up there, on the podium, and relive the magic of those moments.





**7.** *What would be the most personal definition you could give to fencing?*

Fencing is a dialogue you have with your opponent through the blades, but a dialogue in which you must have the last word. And the sword for me was not just an object, but an extension of the hand that helped me write the story of the girl with the tricolor mask.

**8.** *In high-performance sports, there are battles won, but also battles lost. How did you manage the moments when you didn't achieve the desired result?*

Failure is part of every high-performance athlete's career, and from my point of view, it is that teacher who teaches you to rebuild yourself, to reinvent yourself, and to do everything in your power to fulfill your dream. I never had to learn from a success, but the best lessons I received came after the failures I experienced on the fencing strip.





**9.** *How does family life reconcile with the schedule of a high-performance athlete? Did you have to make sacrifices, compromises, or did you manage to find a balance in everything?*

I like to say that if you don't have time for something, it means it's not important enough to you. The word sacrifice seems forced to me, and as I said above, I don't consider that I sacrificed anything to practice sports. Yes, there were certainly moments from family life or from the lives of friends when I couldn't be present, but looking back, all the efforts were worth it.

**10.** *What are the most important qualities that you believe a person who wants to achieve excellence should have?*

I often say about myself, and I firmly believe, that I am nothing more than the child who dared to dream and who worked every day for his dream until he succeeded in fulfilling it. If I succeeded, anyone can do it! Ambition, passion, work, dedication, and determination are, in my opinion, part of the ingredients of a possible "recipe for success."

**11.** *You were declared the best female fencer in the world three times, in 2008, 2009, and 2013. What did this title mean to you, how did it make you feel? What does success mean to you?*

By the end of my career, I had accumulated five such titles, which represent a confirmation that over several seasons I managed to achieve meritorious results. It's not just a title, but more of a recognition that thrilled me immensely.

**12.** *What message did you want to convey to children by writing the book "En Garde"?*

The book "En Garde! The Girl with the Tricolor Mask" is the story of a girl who had a dream that she managed, with the help of the adults in her life, to fulfill. It's my story written in language adapted to children, and I made sure to convey in the book the moments when I didn't shine on the podium because I believe that children should have an image as close to reality as possible.





**15.** *What inspires you about a gendarme you meet on the street? Are there things we could change to be closer to citizen?*

I confess that the presence of gendarmes initially conveys a feeling that's quite hard to put into words. You think that if they are there, there might be a potential situation, but their presence also offers a certain comfort, a feeling of security.



**13.** *In an increasingly digitized world, how could we bring children closer to sports?*

Being a good example for them, and I am glad to see more and more young families choosing to spend quality time together, engaging in various physical activities. Whether they ride bikes or just go to the park, I consider it essential for adults to initiate such moments that children enjoy, and thus, movement will become part of their routine.

**14.** *Like athletes, a military career requires rigor, training, effort, and often distance from family. What would be the three most important pieces of advice you would give to young people who would like to embrace a career in the gendarmerie?*

First of all, they should want it, be willing to put in effort, and be patient with each stage because that's how they will build a solid foundation. Performance, in any field, takes time all the time.

**16.** *What would be the next dream you would want to fight for?*

I'm naturally a dreamer, although the stage I'm in now doesn't allow me to dream about the medals I can win anymore, so I only dream about the medals our athletes are about to win. And partly, I dream and try all the sports I've been afraid to try so far. I dream of a world where we live in harmony and joy, and of the good we can bring into the lives of our fellow human beings with whom fate may not have been so generous. As I said, I'm a dreamer.



”I only know that when it works out, you can say it was worth it. When it doesn’t, you pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and start over on the same path.”

*Ana-Maria Brânză*



INTERVIEW



**GENDARMERIE TODAY**

# **SAREX 2024 Buzău**

**SUCCESS OF COOPERATION**



Second lieutenant Gabriela-Francesca CONSTANTIN-ALBU  
Second lieutenant Alexandra Andreea VASILE



In a remarkable display of coordination and readiness, the Sărata Monteoru resort in Buzău County witnessed an impressive mobilization on April 9th and 10th, 2024. The operational-level interagency exercise, SAREX 2024 Buzău, organized under the auspices of the Romanian Gendarmerie, marked a decisive step toward strengthening intervention and cooperation capabilities in critical situations.

The resolution of approximately 50 simulated incidents formed the core of the actions carried out during the two-day exercise. In a concentrated effort, search and rescue operations were conducted in challenging environments, interventions in public order and emergency situations were managed, as well as simulations of medical emergencies and anti-terrorist actions.

A complex scenario tested the capabilities of each involved entity, thereby assessing their level of preparedness and response to various unpredictable situations.

Over 300 persons from various Romanian institutions participated in the two-day SAREX exercise. These included the General Inspectorate of Romanian Gendarmerie, Gendarmerie Inspectorates of Argeș, Bacău, Covasna, Dâmbovița, Neamț, Prahova, Suceava, Mobile Gendarmerie Group Bacău, Mountain Gendarmerie Training Center Sinaia, County Police Inspectorate Buzău, Emergency Inspectorate Buzău, General Aviation Inspectorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2nd Infantry Division Getica, Anti-Terrorist Brigade of the Romanian Intelligence Service, Regional Intelligence Directorate South Moldova, Public Mountain Rescue Service Vrancea, Romanian Red Cross Buzău Branch, and Buzău County Medical Center. The integrated command of the exercise was led by officers in senior roles from the Buzău County Gendarmerie Inspectorate.

Intra- and inter-institutional cooperation was a crucial aspect of the exercise, highlighting solidarity and the effectiveness of actions among the participating entities.

Careful planning included the simulation of realistic scenarios relevant to the current context of public events involving large audiences, often held in tourist resorts.

A distinctive feature of the SAREX Buzău 2024 exercise was the direct involvement of the local community and participants in public events and sports competitions held in mountainous or hard-to-access areas.

Over 400 students participated in educational activities, learning appropriate techniques and behaviors in emergency situations, thereby strengthening the community's resilience against potential hazards. The involvement of students was facilitated by the Buzău County School Inspectorate, supporting this exercise.

*“The details of the SAREX Buzău 2024 exercise began to be finalized starting December 2023, as soon as we learned that it was both an honor and a pleasure to host this significant event. From the outset, we considered it one of the greatest challenges of our careers, a major motivational factor that fueled our desire to surpass the level of previous LIVEX exercises in recent years.*

*An unprecedented aspect of this exercise was the involvement of the community on two major fronts. To achieve maximum realism in the actions of the exercise, we incorporated two annual public events held in the Sărata*

*Monteoru resort: an*

*enduro competition and the Buzău Fest - festival, which attracts tens of thousands of participants each year.*

*What made this exercise unique was the active participation of the actual organizers of these events in the scenario, they*





*contributed personnel and logistics, directly involved in resolving hypothetical incidents as part of the scenario. This allowed them to understand the actions taken by law enforcement and emergency response structures in case real incidents requiring intervention were to occur during their actual events.*

*A key strength that significantly contributed to what I dare to call a successful exercise was the active involvement of all invited structures. In this regard, it is noteworthy that SAREX Buzău 2024 was the first LIVEX-type exercise organized by the Gendarmerie, bringing together all entities responsible for emergency situations arising from a major earthquake during a public order mission.*

...

*I understood that all objectives were achieved as each of the nearly 50 incidents created in the exercise scenario was resolved.*

*It was clear that every person involved—whether military, public servant, or civilian—put their heart into everything they did. The joy of resolving the scenarios was visible; actions were carried out as in real situations, immediately surpassing the thought of “It’s just an exercise!”*

*For me, the most valuable feedback came at the moment of saying goodbye to the students, when an approximately 8-year-old girl, a student at the school in Merei, told me with complete sincerity: “You know, if a disaster happens, I won’t be scared. I’ll calmly go to safe places, help scared children to calm down, and listen to what people in uniforms tell me to do next.”*

*The simple language of this child captures everything we aimed to achieve through SAREX Buzău 2024: we prepared together, people in uniforms of all colors, and the community. This truly exemplifies the level of readiness that needs to be achieved through resilience!*

*“As the exercise director, it was a distinct honor that provided me with the opportunity to showcase my professional experience, strengthen cooperation and collaboration relationships, and meet exceptional individuals.*





*It also served as a first step towards organizing, in the future, exercises of greater complexity than SAREX Buzău 2024,"*



stated Colonel Cueru Virgil-Ioan, Chief Inspector of the Buzău County Gendarmerie Inspectorate.

SAREX 2024 Buzău is not just an ordinary exercise; it represents a concrete step in implementing the partnership between the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations and the General Inspectorate of Romanian Gendarmerie. This partnership has made possible the project "Increasing disaster resilience through improved preparedness for search and rescue missions and unexploded ordnance clearance" - RESILIENCE, funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism.

*"The evaluation of the inter-institutional SAREX 2024 Buzău exercise involved a detailed analysis of several aspects, including the level of cooperation and coordination among participating institutions, the effectiveness of interventions in simulated scenarios, and participant feedback."*

*Our conclusions highlighted efficient cooperation between institutions and effective coordination of actions in emergency situations. Additionally, participant feedback was positive, indicating appreciation for how well the exercise was*

*organized and conducted.*

*Overall, SAREX 2024 Buzău significantly contributed to enhancing preparedness and response capabilities in emergency situations for all involved institutions, thereby strengthening community resilience against various threats and challenges.*

*To conclude, I would like to mention a quote that I find representative of this activity and reflects the extraordinary effort put in by all participants: 'Don't wish it were easier, wish you were better.' - Jim Rohn,"* recounted Major Nenciu Mihai Constantin, specialist officer in the Public Order and Safety Directorate of the General Inspectorate of Romanian Gendarmerie, who was part of the exercise evaluation team.



In conclusion, SAREX 2024 Buzău not only tested intervention capabilities but also demonstrated the strength of collaboration between institutions and the community in facing challenges. It is a poignant example of preparedness and commitment from intervention forces in ensuring the safety and protection of citizens.





# BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE „CARPATHIANS BLUE SHIELD 2024”



NCO Alexandra VASILESCU



*“On a sunny morning during the exercise, while I was trying to capture the perfect frame, I was shocked by the moment when the platoon commander gave the order and a group of massive and well-trained fighters began to move at an alert pace towards me... Admittedly, I took a picture, but clearly not what I had in mind”.*





This is one of the most vivid memories I had from this experience. To give a little context, I will start with the fact that from May 19th until May 24th 2024, I had the privilege of being part of the international exercise, of the combined operational level (JOINT) “CARPATHIANS BLUE SHIELD 2024”, organized by the Romanian Gendarmerie and which brought together over 300 military men from 11 countries within the European Union.

My name is Vasilescu Alexandra, and during this exercise I held the position of Press and Public Information Officer - PPIO, which gave me a unique perspective on the event, combining office responsibilities with capturing significant moments through photographs.

The Romanian Gendarmerie National Training Center Ochiuri was my home during the six days of the exercise, and the truth is that the days felt much warmer and sunnier there, as every morning I had the opportunity to learn and collaborate with people from different cultures.

Despite the fact that the 19th of May did not find me in my best shape, it turned out to be a promising day, as it represented the opening of the exercise. During that day I was the moderator of the national flag-hoisting ceremony, but also of the actual opening ceremony of the exercise held in the amphitheater of the center. The emotions were at high level, but seeing that “sea of people” gathered from all corners of Europe and united for the same purpose of continuous training, increased confidence in me and in the success of the exercise.

On the same day, coordination meetings and specific trainings were held, in order for the participants to be familiar with the scenario of the exercise. After the ceremony and initiation activities were over, it was the ideal moment to start socializing with both acquaintances and strangers. I hid my gaze for a while, as I was pretty shy. I knew from the beginning that although I like to meet new people, it is quite difficult for me to initiate a conversation.

Fortunately, I met up with old friends, and with their help the communication channel was much smoother. It was the push I needed to start being the one to open the conversation. I felt that the time passed far too quickly in my attempt to meet as many comrades-in-arms as possible, but it was certain that it was used productively.







From day one, I realized that the role of Press and Public Information Officer would face a barrier, because effective communication meant more than office work, it meant active involvement and documentation through images and videos to support the activity. Thus, the first impediment turned out to be the challenge that kept me active throughout the exercise and showed me that when there is desire and passion, work becomes a pleasure. My office was quite a cluttered place, where I communicated with colleagues and evaluated the information received.

There, I wrote press releases, updated the exercise website and answered questions from journalists. In the field, I was always on the move, photographing the military men in action, capturing moments of collaboration and documenting complex scenarios thought out down to the smallest detail. Photographs were also essential in conveying the story of the exercise. We captured expressions of concentration, team moments and emotional reactions.

In fact, that was what the PPIO function was all about, to be the liaison between law enforcement and the media, but also to ensure that key messages reached the public.

The next few days could be defined by the terms action and adaptation. As the exercise entered the action phase, participants were involved in simulations of public order crisis situations.

I barely had time to filter through my mind all that had happened the previous day and it was already morning. Impatiently, those of us who were part of the command center headed to the location that would be the headquarters during the simulations. As we arrived in the building, we each sat in our proper place and without any hesitation opened our work units, at which point a message displayed on the computer monitor said STARTEX. This represented the start of the exercise and entry into the role. We were informed that every day, the head of the mission within the exercise held the initial briefing through which we outlined the tasks and objectives of that day. At the end of the day, we all gathered in the center's amphitheater, to report on their achievement and the problems encountered.



Capabilities of rapid reaction, coordination and adaptation to unexpected changes were tested. I was finding myself more and more in my role. I felt like I was part of a great team, made up of people with vast experience and from various fields. I could see how we all put our cultural differences aside and work as a team to complete all the tasks we had. Everything we worked on in the command center reached our colleagues in the field, and success was guaranteed.

The last but one day added even more to the fact that the exercise was fast approaching the end. In such a short time, I witnessed a multitude of action-packed moments staged by the operative structures of the multinational force, with a clear objective: training participants for international missions under the auspices of the European Union. After the last crisis simulation ended, a message appeared on our monitors again, saying ENDEX. That's when we realized that the exercise was over, and we needed to get out of the role.

On the last day, a detailed assessment was carried out. What was done well? What can be improved? We received feedback and had the opportunity to share our experiences, and the overall goal was achieved: capacity building for international missions. From the point of view of international cooperation, it was evident at every moment. I worked alongside colleagues from 11 countries, learned from each other and created lasting bonds.

In conclusion, "Blue Shield of the Carpathians 2024" was a complex and valuable experience for all those involved. It was proof of the professionalism and dedication of the Romanian structures and international partners. As for me, through my role as Press and Public Information Officer, I have learned that photos can tell powerful stories and communication is the key to success in any mission.





# SERGIU BREB - THE ROMANIAN GENDARME WHO WON SIX EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES IN SANDA WUSHU MARTIAL ARTSU

Second lieutenant Andreea MIRA



Sergiu Breb, our colleague from the Bihor County Gendarmerie Inspectorate, has once again climbed to the highest step of the podium at the European Sanda Wushu Championship (85 kg category), which took place this year between May 3 and 5 in Stockholm.

Such a performance is not easy because over 400 athletes from 29 countries participated in the competition, but his results came from a long-standing passion for sports, an ambitious personality, and many hours of dedicated training.

*"When I received the gold medal, I felt a combination of joy, coming from achieving an important goal, pride, which comes with the recognition of all my efforts, and the satisfaction of reaching the desired performance," he confesses.*

We asked Sergiu which skills acquired during his career as a gendarme he believes helped him in his preparation for his exceptional results in martial arts: *"One of the skills is discipline because the career of a gendarme imposes a strict routine and rigorous discipline, which are essential in training; another skill is physical and mental endurance; and, last but not least, quick and decisive reaction."*



Sergiu was born in Oradea and spent his childhood both in his hometown and in the countryside with his grandparents. He started practicing sports from a young age, beginning with judo at the age of 8. He continued with kickboxing and crossfit.

Six years ago, Sergiu discovered Sanda Wushu, a type of full-contact martial art that allows the use of hand techniques, kicks, holds, sweeps, and throws. He identified so much with this sport that he quickly managed to amass an entire arsenal of titles: 6 national champion titles, one vice-champion title, 5 European champion titles, and one European vice-champion title.

There are three principles from this sport that Sergiu believes can also be applied to life in general: *"The first principle would be fair play. The second would be discipline, because you cannot practice it without having respect for the coach, referee, colleagues, and opponents. The third principle, which I consider vital, is the competitive spirit!"*

In 2018 Sergiu joined the Mobile Gendarmerie Detachment of Oradea, and since 2022 he has been part of the AT team. He embraced a career in Gendarmerie because he wanted to instill in others a sense of security, just as he felt when he was a child.

Now himself a father of two girls (Alice - 5 years old and Mara - 7 months old), he divides his time between family, the Gendarmerie, and training. Because Sergiu has another dream: to become a Sanda Wushu world champion, and he hopes to achieve this title next year.

We wish him great success and we are confident that his ambition and determination will take him anywhere he wants to go.









**C**heile Grădiștei, Romania. May 19-24, 2024. 800 athletes from 32 countries. 9 sports disciplines and 17 competitions. These are the main coordinates of the IPA Games 2024, the third edition of the sport competition event organized by IPA and hosted this year by Romania.

The event started on May 19 in a festive setting in Bran, in the presence of Mr. Bogdan Despescu, General Police Commissioner, Secretary of State, Mr. Mihai Liviu Tărtăreanu – President of IPA Romania, and Mr. Ion Țiriac, honorary member of IPA Romania.

*“It is an honor to participate in this event of the International Police Association. With over 74 years of existence, IPA has become the largest professional police organization in the world, with over 400,000 members and 69 national sections across 6 continents. Since last year, Romania has held the top spot within the Association, with over 58,000 members. The IPA Games is the Association’s largest international event. This year, in Romania, at its third edition, we have seen a 70% increase in the number of participants, with a total of over 800 police officers. In conclusion, I would like to extend my best wishes from the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and wish you all much success”,* stated Mr. Bogdan Despescu, General Police Commissioner, Secretary of State, in his opening speech.

Mr. Mihai Liviu Tărtăreanu – President of IPA Romania emphasized:

*“Institutions are not made of walls, glass, and steel. Institutions are made of people, and people are the fundamental and most important resource of any entity. So, all our energy and attention are focused on investing in human resources.*

*The fact that today we are at the start of an event with over 800 people from over 30 countries clearly demonstrates that, regardless of the geographical area in which we operate, there are more things that unite us than those that separate us.*

*This week, sport, friendship, respect, and fair play will be the cardinal points of an event that we hope will remain in everyone’s memory as further proof of the human quality of those who wear the uniform and who have chosen every day to put their lives in the service of the community.*

*I wish you all success, not before reaffirming IPA Romania’s firm commitment as a reliable partner for any project aimed at improving the standard of living, the organizational microclimate, professional parameters, and last but not least, the services we offer to citizens. Semper lex et honor, Servo per Amikeco!”*







national and international competitions (Cheile Grădiștei Resort & SPA).

Additionally, nearby is Bran Castle, Romania's largest tourism ambassador, which served as another significant attraction for participants.

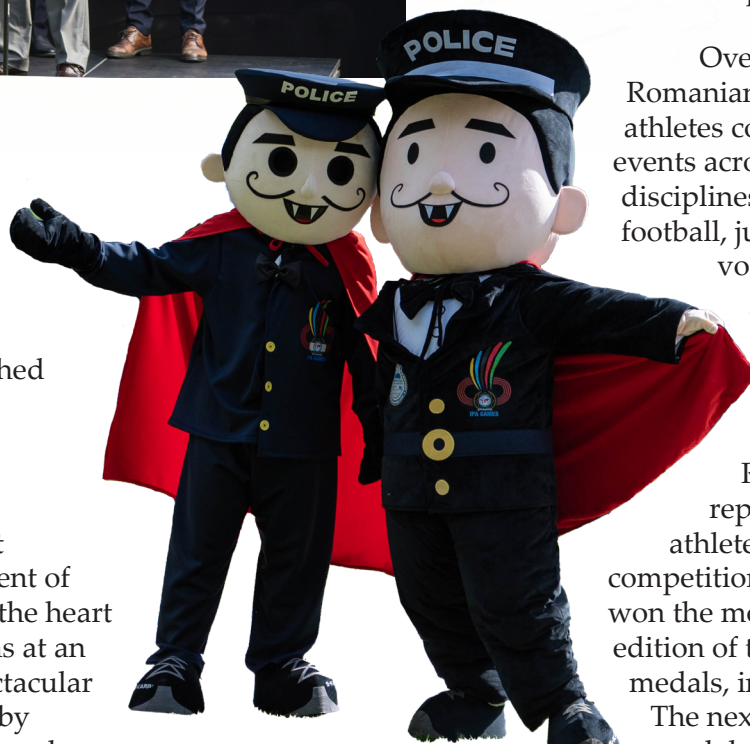
Over the 6 days, Romanian and international athletes competed in 17 events across 9 sports disciplines for medals: football, judo, table tennis, volleyball, basketball, chess, biathlon, shooting, and cross-country (5km).

IPA Romania was represented by 135 athletes registered in 9 competition disciplines and won the most medals at this edition of the IPA Games: 72 medals, including 35 gold.

The next countries in the medal rankings were IPA Lithuania (with 15 medals), IPA Moldova, and IPA Poland (with 8 medals each).

*„Dear participants, welcome to Romania! Welcome to my country! I congratulate you for being here and wish you all much success!”, Mr. Ion Țiriac wished those present.*

Cheile Grădiștei, the location chosen for the IPA Games 2024, met the perfect conditions for a sporting event of such magnitude: located in the heart of the Carpathian Mountains at an altitude of 1300m, with spectacular landscapes, complemented by rustic charm and a sports complex offering a wide range of facilities for various activities, including tennis courts, swimming pools, and football fields, capable of hosting







### The Romanian Gendarmerie at IPA Games 2024

Through sustained training, ambition, and competitive spirit, our colleagues participating in the 2024 edition of the IPA Games managed to reach the podium:

- Major Simona Floricel (Olt County Gendarmerie Inspectorate) – 2nd place in Biathlon and Cross, 2nd place individually (45+ category), and 1st place with the IPA Romania team (40+ category)
- Sgt. Maj. Ionuț Timofte (Dâmbovița County Gendarmerie Inspectorate) – 2nd place in 5km cross and 1st place with the IPA Romania team (35-39 years category)
- Sgt. Maj. Drăgan Constantin Sorinel (Bacău Mobile Gendarmerie Group) – 1st place in judo (73kg category, 40-50 years age group).



*„I had the opportunity to participate in two editions of the sports games organized by the International Police Association. I allocated time to prepare for this event so that my objectives could be achieved, in terms of obtaining good times in each competition.*

*At this edition, too, I managed to reach the podium, and the results in the individual events brought me great satisfaction given the large number of participants and their level of preparation. Certainly, it was also important that this competition took place at home, and all Romanian athletes were motivated by seeing the Romanian flag rise on the international podium”, Simona Floricel told us.*

IPA Games 2024 brought together young and senior athletes and members passionate about sports, more than 800 people from over 30 countries, who shared the same spirit that represents the foundation of the Association: fair play, respect, and friendship without borders.





# GENDARMERIE IN THE INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK



Colonel Dorin LUȚĂ,  
Head of the Lessons Learned Department  
NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence

## STABILITY POLICING AND DRONE WARFARE:

STABNEW CHALLENGES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND INTERNAL SECURITY SYSTEMS OF NATO MEMBER COUNTRIES

From March 6-8, the NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, as a center of expertise, innovation, and transformation for NATO's Stability Policing (SP), hosted a workshop at its headquarters in Vicenza, Italy, on the theme "*SP and Drone Warfare: New Challenges for Law Enforcement Agencies and Internal Security Systems of NATO Member Countries*".

The purpose of this workshop was to create a platform where subject matter experts and practitioners from NATO, NATO member countries, and other international organizations, together with the SP community, could identify ways law enforcement agencies should become aware of the growing threat posed by the use of drones and how to mitigate their effects on civilian populations.

The activity was attended by 27 experts from 9 NATO member countries, with discussions focusing on potential connections between SP as a NATO capability and the uncontrolled use of unmanned aerial vehicles/systems (UAV/UAS), while also identifying the

implications (and potential dysfunctions) for the internal security systems of countries that must combat this new type of threat.

Given that NATO currently faces new challenges such as military attack drones or other UAV/UAS that threaten its members' territories (sometimes even causing damage through deliberate crash/accidental fall), ways in which law enforcement agencies could act to maintain public order and safety, ensuring citizens' freedom of movement and the protection of critical infrastructures, were considered

*Specifically, the discussions followed these areas:*

- Interception of Class I drones/UAVs;
- Management and technical exploitation of fallen/crashed drones (of all classes), including safety/security measures from a military/intelligence perspective;
- Ensuring the security climate and freedom of movement of people, from the perspective of law enforcement agencies;
- On-site investigation;
- Legal framework.



*At the end of the workshop, the preliminary conclusions of the discussions were presented to the center's leadership, among which the following ideas were highlighted:*

- Currently, there are no doctrinal publications regulating the role of SP in countering UAV/UAS;
- Law enforcement agencies should conduct specific activities to counter the growing UAV/UAS threat, specifically to manage and technically exploit fallen/crashed UAVs on national territories;
- From a NATO perspective, UAV/UAS activities should be included in multi-domain operations;
- The internal security systems of NATO member countries are different, and communication between them should be harmonized, both inter-state and at the NATO alliance level, to avoid potential constraints/limitations that impact law enforcement agencies' activity in combating UAV/UAS;
- The private sector has a significant contribution in supporting law enforcement agencies' activities to combat UAV/UAS, as well as in updating their personnel training in the UAV/UAS field;
- An in-depth discussion is needed

regarding the use of UAV/UAS for commercial purposes and situations where they could be considered weapons legally, for both law enforcement and military authorities;

- Potential roles and activities of law enforcement agencies to manage and technically exploit fallen/crashed UAVs were explored, assuming the relevant legal framework has already been adopted;
- Challenges posed by UAV/UAS should be considered at all managerial levels and in all stages of law enforcement agencies' activities;
- To effectively protect infrastructures of any kind against UAV/UAS attacks, law enforcement agencies should equip themselves with appropriate capabilities.

Following the workshop, the NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence will develop a detailed report on the conclusions of the discussions by the end of May 2024, which will include concrete proposals for harmonizing the approach that various internal security systems in NATO member countries should take to combat UAV/UAS.







# The Romanian Gendarmerie hosted the 19th meeting of the Steering Committee of the NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence

Second lieutenant Andreea Mira  
NCO Andreea Iconaru



On May 15-16, the 19th meeting of the Steering Committee of the NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence (NATO SP COE) took place at the headquarters of the Romanian Gendarmerie General Inspectorate.

The organization of this meeting by the Romanian Gendarmerie once again proves that our institution is internationally recognized and creates multiple opportunities, particularly related to benefiting from the Alliance's experience in this field, the lessons learned from previous civil crisis management operations in post-conflict situations, increasing

the institution's prestige and visibility, and facilitating access to visibility positions in future NATO operations.

The first day of the meeting began with welcoming the representatives of gendarmerie and military police structures from Italy, Czech Republic, France, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Turkey, as well as representatives from NATO SP COE, specifically from NATO Allied Command Transformation, by the leadership of the Romanian Gendarmerie.

*"It is an honor for us to host this meeting, which plays a very important role. In the current international context, it is essential to*





*collaborate and share experiences to improve our strategies*", stated Brigadier General Mitu Leontin, Head of the Public Order and Safety Directorate of the Romanian Gendarmerie, in the opening of the event.

Additionally, Colonel Luigi Bramati, Director of the NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, stated, *"It is a pleasure to be in Romania today, at the headquarters of the Romanian Gendarmerie, and we thank you for the warm welcome! I hope this meeting will be useful for our future activities! Thank you to the Romanian Gendarmerie for this opportunity!"*.

During the two days, the Steering Committee members addressed issues of interest regarding providing a long-term strategic perspective, including monitoring the missions and tasks of the Centre of Excellence.

The program also included a guided tour of the Palace of the Parliament, a military technology and tactics exhibition organized by the Special Intervention Brigade of the Gendarmerie and the General Directorate of the Gendarmes of the Municipality of Bucharest on the plateau of the Băneasa Barracks, as well as a demonstration exercise aimed at showing guests the working methods in the field for special interventions.

The activity of the Centre of Excellence consists of developing studies, concepts, doctrines, security standards, and organizing training courses in support of military police forces that, according to national competencies, carry out specific missions in the field of stability policing operations.

The countries participating in the Centre of Excellence are Italy, Czech Republic, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, Turkey, and Greece. Since 2015, Romania has been represented by the Romanian Gendarmerie, which periodically deploys personnel to the Centre.





# NEW PUBLIC COMMUNICATION APPROACHES BY EUROGENDFOR

Major Laurențiu CIOBANU  
Captain Cătălin Mircea BĂDIN



Between May 29 and 31, at the Permanent Command of EUROGENDFOR in Vicenza, Italy, the Romanian Gendarmerie, as a full member, was invited to participate by delegating two specialists in institutional public communication. Major Laurențiu Ciobanu, from the IGJR Public Information Center, and Captain Cătălin Mircea Bădin, from the “Dunărea de Jos” Galați County Inspectorate of Gendarmes, joined specialists from Italy, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Poland, and Lithuania to present the institution’s vision regarding public communication, particularly through social media pages.

Public communication is an essential element of any institution or organization, especially one of a military nature. Openness to society through various social media channels can represent an institutional advantage and increase the visibility of the institution. In terms of public relations, this can translate into an increase in positive image and the combating of misinformation. This aspect has been well understood by the command of the European Gendarmerie Force (EUROGENDFOR).

To create new synergies, apply new strategies in communication through social media, and use them

effectively for maximum public display, a workshop was organized for the first time to review the EUROGENDFOR Communication Plan, which was first developed in 2018.

The official opening of the workshop was conducted by Colonel Hans Vroegh (Royal Netherlands Marechaussee), commander of EUROGENDFOR, who emphasized the importance of the activity in the context of the organization’s current and future missions. He also thanked the member countries, through their representatives, for accepting the organization’s invitation and understanding the importance of public communication, not only for EUROGENDFOR but also for the member states.

Moreover, Colonel Vroegh stressed the importance of close collaboration between the public communication structures of the member states to keep each other updated on new public communication trends, the evolution of social media in the public community, and ways to overcome image crises.



To better understand the organization, its structure, role, and missions, Lieutenant Colonel Francesco Buconi (Carabinieri), EUROGENDFOR's public information officer, presented the guests with a brief history of the organization, its current missions, and his vision of the new EUROGENDFOR Communication Plan.

Later, the workshop participants were divided into two working groups with different focuses, to draft their proposals and facilitate writing the new Plan:

1. \*Working Group 1\*, led by Major Adriano Fortes (Portuguese National Republican Guard), EUROGENDFOR logistics officer, aimed to improve the theoretical structure of the Plan, its objectives, and the communication concept. Members included: Major Laurențiu Ciobanu (Romania), Colonel (Ret.) Saulius Guzevičius (Lithuania), Camille Dechamps (France), Lieutenant Colonel Wilfried J. Goos (Netherlands), Captain João Lourenço (Portugal), Lieutenant Colonel Gerardina Corona (Italy), and Major Lucio De Angelis (Italy).
2. \*Working Group 2\*, led by Lieutenant Colonel Francesco Buconi, aimed to enhance the organization's public communication methods online and through social media accounts. Members included: Captain Cătălin-Mircea Bădin (Romania), Ingrida Stragienė (Lithuania), Captain Sawa Iwo (Poland), Major Steven Comba (Netherlands), Warrant Officer Luis Miguel Gonzales (Spain), Lieutenant Colonel Michele De Rosa (Italy), and Warrant Officer Jose Enrique (EUROGENDFOR).

The first day's activities concluded with a "Lectio Magistralis" by Brigadier General Giuseppe De Magistris, director of the Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units (CoESPU), who highlighted the excellent collaboration between EUROGENDFOR, CoESPU, and the member states, as well as the importance of public communication in the new European security context.

The second day continued with group activities, each group drafting their conclusions for modifying and updating the Plan. The Romanian Gendarmerie delegation provided an institutional vision that could be applied to the new communication document, a vision pertinent to the new communication trends of society, which was shared by all participants. This led to the development of the presented ideas for better understanding by the working groups.

The final day focused on drafting the proposals and conclusions reached by the two working groups, and the material was presented to the EUROGENDFOR command, which appreciated its quality and modern vision for the new Communication Plan. Colonel Hans Vroegh decided that such activities should be held annually so that the organization and member states can update each other on new public communication trends.

What did this experience represent? The most effective way to understand how foreign partners communicate, their communication priorities, how they address various situations from a public image perspective, and to form new friendships.





# The General Commander of the Carabinieri from the Republic of Moldova, working visit to the Romanian Gendarmerie



Major Adrian DUMITRESCU

**O**n Wednesday, May 22nd, a delegation led by the General Commander of the General Inspectorate of Carabinieri from the Republic of Moldova, Colonel Dumitru SCURTU, made a working visit to the headquarters of the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Gendarmerie.

The General Commander of the Carabinieri from the Republic of Moldova was welcomed by the Inspector General of the Romanian Gendarmerie, Brigadier General Alin MASTAN, during a military ceremony.

At the opening of the event, the Inspector General of the Romanian Gendarmerie expressed his gratitude to Colonel Dumitru SCURTU for visiting the institution's

headquarters and for the excellent cooperative relationship between the Romanian Gendarmerie and the General Inspectorate of Carabinieri from the Republic of Moldova, appreciating the collaboration between the two institutions.

In his speech, Colonel Dumitru SCURTU thanked for the reception at the Romanian Gendarmerie's headquarters, stating that *"your support is very*





*important, and surely this meeting creates the premises for bilateral cooperation between the institutions we represent."*

The meeting was also attended by representatives of the General Directorate of Gendarmes of the Municipality of Bucharest, the Special Intervention Brigade of the Romanian Gendarmerie, and the Application School for Officers of the Romanian Gendarmerie.

The discussions focused on presenting the specifics of each unit, their competencies, and training activities, with the

Romanian Gendarmerie showing readiness to develop cooperation with their partner from the Republic of Moldova in areas of common interest.

At the end of the meeting, the General Commander of the Carabinieri from the Republic of Moldova was invited to sign the Honorary Book of the Romanian Gendarmerie.

**T**he delegation's visit continued with their participation in the International Exercise "CARPATHIANS BLUE SHIELD 2024," held at the Gendarmerie Training Center in Ochiuri.



# THE FRENCH NATIONAL GENDARMERIE AND THE ROMANIAN GENDARMERIE,

## COLLABORATION PLANS FOR JOINT TRAINING

On February 15th, a French delegation led by Lieutenant General André Petillot, Major General of the French National Gendarmerie, made a working visit to the headquarters of the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Gendarmerie, where they were welcomed by the leadership of the Romanian Gendarmerie in a military ceremony

At the opening of the event, the Inspector General of the Romanian Gendarmerie, Brigadier General Alin Mastan, expressed his gratitude to the foreign delegation for the close friendship the French National Gendarmerie has shown towards the Romanian Gendarmerie, appreciating the traditional collaboration between the two institutions. *"We are honored by this occasion. Throughout our inter-institutional relations, we have benefited from the help of the French Gendarmerie, an essential contribution to the development of the Romanian Gendarmerie. I am confident that in the future we will be able to develop the objectives that we mutually agree upon at the institutional level."*

In his speech, Lieutenant General André Petillot thanked for the reception at the Romanian Gendarmerie headquarters, stating that *"it is important to strengthen these ties, considering the crisis Europe is going through, and I believe that our united strength plays an important role in training. I consider that we are part of the same family, and from this arises the necessity to work and progress together, to support each other in such moments."*



During the meeting, discussions were held regarding cooperation in the mountain domain between the French National Gendarmerie Training Center in Chamonix and the Mountain Gendarmerie Officers Training Center in Sinaia, as well as the twinning between the National Training Center of the French National Gendarmerie in Saint-Astier and the Gendarmerie Officers Training Center in Ochiuri for joint training in public order for Romanian gendarmes, alongside their French counterparts.



Additionally, another topic of discussion was the cooperation between the Special Intervention Brigade of the Romanian Gendarmerie and the Intervention Group of the French National Gendarmerie. Both structures have similar roles and are members of the ATLAS Group, created at the European Union level, alongside the most prestigious military and police structures with competences in the prevention and combating of terrorism. Representatives of the General Directorate of Gendarmes of the Municipality of Bucharest and the Special Intervention Brigade of the Gendarmerie also attended the meeting.



At the end of the meeting, Lieutenant General André Petillot was invited to sign the Honor Book of the Romanian Gendarmerie.

\*  
\* \*

Continuing the activity, on March 14th, a delegation led by the commander of the Intervention Group of the French National Gendarmerie (GIGN), Major General Ghislain Réty, arrived in Bucharest for a working visit to the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Gendarmerie. The agenda included discussions between the French guests and representatives of the leadership of the Romanian Gendarmerie, the General Directorate of Gendarmes of the Municipality of Bucharest, and the Special Intervention Brigade of the Romanian Gendarmerie.

As discussed during the 2023 meetings with the Director General of the French National Gendarmerie and Lieutenant General André Petillot during his visit in February this year, one of the points of interest of this visit was the signing of a cooperation document to materialize the activities between the two intervention units of the institutions, the Special Intervention Brigade of the Romanian Gendarmerie, and the National Intervention Group of the French Gendarmerie.





# Military Strategic Partnership Conference 2024 and COE Marketplace 2024



OR9 Tedy ROTARU,  
Education and Cooperation Staff Assistant  
NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence in Vicenza, Italy



From April 8-12, 2024, in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, under the aegis of the Supreme Allied Command for Transformation, the Military Strategic Partnership Conference took place.

The event included a working session with representatives from the Centres of Excellence, SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe), and ACT (Allied Command Transformation) to discuss training options and changes to SHAPE's objectives, as well as the latest information regarding the new ePRIME platform (Partnership Realtime Information, Management and Exchange System).

Another key objective of this conference was to facilitate NATO-level collaboration regarding current and future engagements with its wide range of partners.

From May 21-23, 2024, at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, the NATO Centres of Excellence gathered for a two-day event, on May 22 and 23, called "COE Marketplace."

This event, now in its third edition, provided me with the opportunity to participate for the second time and to share the activities of the Centre of Excellence with NATO leadership and the NATO community of interest.

During the event, I engaged in promotional activities for the institution, providing information on the variety of courses organized by the Centre of Excellence, as well as its current and future projects.

The Centres of Excellence are not part of NATO's command structure but belong to a broader framework that supports NATO Command with valuable expertise and experience, benefiting the Alliance and supporting NATO transformation.



These centres contribute to the efficiency of processes and resources, ensuring there is no unnecessary duplication of resources or capabilities already existing within NATO's command structure.

At these two events, each Centre had the opportunity to present their contributions to the Alliance, and the international staff and military personnel at NATO Headquarters appreciated the value of the expertise, support, and consultancy offered by the NATO-accredited Centres.



# IN MEMORIAM

## For Eternity: A tribute to Colonel François Després



*François Després received the “Order of Military Virtue in the Rank of Knight” in 2005.*

**H**ow short is a human life? A fleeting moment in the vastness of time, a flicker of light that shines intensely but disappears too soon. In a universe where eternity seems boundless, there are souls that leave an indelible mark through their good deeds and the nobility of their hearts. Such was François Després, a man who gave his best to those around him, but who left this world too early.

On the occasion of the memorial service for Colonel Després, which took place on May 30 of this year, the General Inspector of the Romanian Gendarmerie addressed a message to those present at the Saints Michael and Gabriel Church in the Băneasa barracks:

*„Grieving family, mournful gathering,*

*We come together with hearts full of gratitude and respect to pay tribute to an exceptional man, Colonel François Després, at the memorial service held six months after his passing. Colonel Després was not only an outstanding officer but also a true friend and comrade to the Romanian Gendarmerie.*

*The recent past of the Romanian Gendarmerie is closely linked to the French officer. Between 2003 and 2006, Colonel François Després was the pre-accession advisor to the commander of the Romanian Gendarmerie.*

*His involvement and dedication guided our steps towards a profound transformation, integrating the best practices and values into our structures, which helped to strengthen the professionalism of the officers in the Gendarmerie.*

*We owe it to ourselves to keep alive the good memory of those who have departed! And we commit to carrying forward the memory of our friend, as well as his projects and deeds. We will not let the good work done by God through our good comrade, François Després, fade away.*

*In memory of this remarkable officer and friend, I am honored to announce that, starting today, one of the classrooms at the Romanian Gendarmerie Officers’ Training School will bear the honorary name “Colonel François Després.”*

*This decision symbolizes not only our gratitude for all that he accomplished but also our desire to keep alive the memory and values that he instilled in generations of Romanian gendarmes.*

*On behalf of myself and the entire institution, please accept our heartfelt condolences to the family. We stand with you during these difficult moments and pray that God gives you the strength to overcome this loss. Our gathering here today is not just a ritual but a testament to the living relationship of respect and appreciation that extends beyond the grave.*

*May God forgive him!”*





*Colonel François Després has remained in the memory of his comrades...*

The Director General of the Bucharest Gendarmerie General Directorate, Brigadier General Cătălin Stegăroiu, also shared memories of Colonel Després:



*„I met him when I was a lieutenant, and he was a captain.*

*In November 2002, he began a five-year permanent mission in Romania, from 2002 to 2007, under a PHARE program of the European Union.*

*With his help, we managed to initiate and develop a bilateral cooperation relationship with the French Gendarmerie, through which we established three major centers*

*within the Romanian Gendarmerie: the Officers' Training School 'Mihai Viteazul,' the Training Center for Gendarmerie Personnel 'Ochiuri,' and the Mountain Gendarmerie Personnel Training Center 'Regele Carol I' in Sinaia."*

*Furthermore, with the support of Colonel François Després and the involvement of his team members, a professional intervention standard was implemented uniformly across the national level within the Gendarmerie. He and his team contributed to drafting the new law on the organization and functioning of the Romanian Gendarmerie, a law that remains in force today"*

The memory of Colonel François Després will remain alive in the hearts of those who knew him and in the history of the Romanian Gendarmerie, as an example of dedication, professionalism, and humanity, leaving behind an invaluable legacy for Romanian gendarmes.

*May he rest in peace!*



Second lieutenant Gabriela-Francesca CONSTANTIN-ALBU





*"A photo is worth more than a thousand words"*

## **NCO, Pedestrian Gendarme (Urban), 1934 Model Tunic**

Nicolae Adrian ALEXE,  
museographer within the ASTRA  
National Museum Complex in Sibiu



*Original monochrome photograph from the collection of Nicolae Adrian Alexe, colorization (based on documentation by Nicolae Adrian Alexe) by Andrei Chiper (Facebook page Culori Pierdute).*

The gendarme's cap has a small crown, made between 1930-1934, but the tunic is the 1934 model, dating the image to between 1934-1936.

If he were a rural gendarme, the edges of the epaulettes and collar tabs would be red, not white. The senior sergeant was the highest rank for non-commissioned officers at the time. Gendarmes wore a daily uniform, khaki (between 1923-1948), while the ceremonial uniform was blue.









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