



Dacian Spring 2025: Italy leads NATO response on the southeastern front

Published on 03/06/2025

The participation of the Italian Armed Forces in the exercise **Dacian Spring 2025** successfully concluded, one of the main training events conducted under the aegis of NATO in the southeastern quadrant of the Alliance. The activity, held in Romania and organized by the **NATO Multi National Division South East (MND-SE)**, involved over **4,000 military personnel** from **ten member countries**, engaged in a simulated scenario of **high-intensity combat** in response to a conventional threat.

Air and land integration: the Italian commitment

Italy participated in the exercise with two strategic assets: the **Task Force Air 51st Wing**, operational with **Eurofighter Typhoon** aircraft deployed at the **Mihail Kogălniceanu** base (near Constanța), and the **NATO Multi National Battle Group Bulgaria (MNBG-BGR)**, an Italian-led land unit stationed at the **Novo Selo** base in Bulgaria.

In the training area of **Smârdan** (Romania), the two assets operated synergistically within combined missions, simulating allied defensive operations in a high-intensity context. The Eurofighter aircraft conducted **Close Air Support (CAS) missions** with the use of **live ammunition**, in coordination with the **Tactical Air Control Party/Joint Terminal Attack Controller (TACP/JTAC)** units of the Italian Army, positioned on the ground.

In addition to CAS support, the Italian fighters carried out **simulated attacks with the onboard cannon** against ground targets, under the direct guidance of the **JTAC of the MNBG-BGR**, strengthening interoperability between NATO air and land forces.

Commanders' statements

Colonel Salvatore Abbate, Commander of the MNBG-BGR, emphasized how “participation in training activities of this level increases the **operational readiness** of the Atlantic Alliance and exercises a **clear deterrent function**, contributing to preventing the outbreak of armed conflicts.”

Colonel Marcello Vitucci, Commander of the TFA 51st Wing, highlighted that “the Dacian Spring offered the opportunity for the crews and specialists of the Air Force to operate in a **realistic and complex** training context, further improving the level of **interoperability** with other NATO assets.”

The Italian contribution to collective security

NATO MNBG-BGR

The **Multinational Battle Group Bulgaria** is a unit created within the framework of the **NATO enhanced Forward Presence** initiative to strengthen the Alliance's deterrence posture following the Ukrainian crisis. Since **October 17, 2022**, Italy has assumed the role of **lead nation** of the battalion, currently deploying about **750 military personnel** from the Army, alongside contingents from the **United States, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, Montenegro**,

and **North Macedonia**.

TFA 51st Wing

The **Task Force Air 51st Wing** consists of **Eurofighter** aircraft and about **150 military personnel** from the Air Force. Active in Romania since **March 2025**, it is part of the NATO **enhanced Air Policing** device for the defense of the Black Sea airspace. Operationally, it depends on the **Combined Air Operation Center (CAOC)** in Torrejon, while at the national level it is coordinated by the **Comando Operativo di Vertice Interforze (COVI)**.