



Underwater Security, the Italian Navy Authorized to Engage Those Threatening Strategic Infrastructures

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The Italian government has presented a bill introducing new and powerful rules of engagement for the [Italian Navy](#), granting Italian naval and submarine forces the authorization to intervene with force against anyone threatening the security of strategic underwater infrastructures, such as cables and pipelines. The amendment to the Military Code allows the Italian armed forces to "engage, disable, destroy, seize, or divert" any means, such as submarines or drones, that are attempting to damage or sabotage infrastructures considered of national interest. This measure, included in the bill recently submitted to the Senate, represents an important step to strengthen the security of Italy's strategic underwater resources and responds to growing concerns related to the protection of underwater infrastructures in an increasingly tense global geopolitical context.

The action is necessary at a time when threats in Italian seas are increasingly evident, as demonstrated by the underwater attacks on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline in the Baltic Sea and other international sabotage incidents. The bill is a direct response to these threats, emphasizing the importance of defending vital infrastructures for the country and strengthening the reaction capabilities of the Italian armed forces. The ability to engage suspicious means threatening the security of underwater resources is not only a defensive measure but also a signal of determination to protect Italian strategic assets from hostile interventions.

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Musumeci: the New Agency for the Security of Underwater Activities

Alongside the modification of the rules of engagement for the Navy, the government has also introduced an important innovation with the creation of the Agency for the Security of Underwater Activities. The Minister for Civil Protection and Sea Policies, Nello Musumeci, outlined the bill that provides for the creation of this new entity, which will be responsible for regulating and monitoring civilian and military underwater activities, preventing interference and conflicts between various ongoing operations under the sea. The agency, based in Rome, will also be tasked with coordinating the protection of underwater infrastructures and ensuring adequate security in a rapidly developing sector, which includes advanced technologies, civilian, scientific, military, and tourist operations.

In a context where the underwater dimension is often the subject of conflicts between states and targeted attacks to damage strategic resources, the Agency will also be responsible for exchanging information with the Italian Secret Services regarding critical underwater infrastructures for national security. This new entity fits into an international landscape where Europe is increasingly concerned about the defense of underwater assets and the control of resources in the Mediterranean and beyond.

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Security and New Regulations for Civilian and Military Vessels

Another fundamental aspect of the bill concerns the regulation of civilian underwater activities and the improvement of safety for underwater and hyperbaric operators. The bill addresses a regulatory gap that has long characterized the sector, with the exponential growth of advanced underwater technologies and an increase in activities on the seabed. Incidents like the implosion of the Titan submarine in the Atlantic Ocean in 2023 have highlighted the need for clear and binding international standards for safety in civilian underwater operations. The law, therefore, establishes an updated regulatory framework to govern underwater navigation and the use of submarines, while protecting operators and underwater resources from accidents and sabotage.

The bill, therefore, not only strengthens the defense of strategic infrastructures but also aims to ensure a safer and well-regulated underwater sector, in order to support the growth of the sector and the protection of the marine environment. The creation of the Agency for the Security of Underwater Activities and the introduction of stricter rules for civilian underwater means are part of a broader plan that sees Italy committed to defending its strategic underwater interests in an increasingly complex and dangerous global context.

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