



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE ROMANIAN NAVAL ACADEMY „MIRCEA CEL BĂTRÂN”

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THE MONOGRAPH OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

*International relations in the Romanian Naval Academy	3
*The international exchanges program under the Erasmus+ framework	5
*The international internship exchanges program under the Erasmus+ framework	7
*International academic or military training and education programs conducted under the EMILYO PROGRAM	8
*International exchange programs as photos	9
*ANMB coordinates as project leaders: The NAVY-INS-Tech initiative	11
*TRAINING SHIP „MIRCEA” TS: the honorary ambassador of Romania	12
*International protocol activities	13
*Research and development projects	15



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE ROMANIAN NAVAL ACADEMY

The internationalization process of the Romanian Naval Academy „Mircea cel Bătrân” in the last decades has been focused on increasing the academic visibility and its impact at regional, European, and international levels. This has been achieved by continuously and adaptively leveraging opportunities for the development and diversification of educational and training offerings, as well as scientific research, innovation, and institutional development programs, in a competitive, intercultural, and multinational environment. In the complex contemporary context, the strategic development vision at the international level has systematically aimed at defining the Romanian Naval Academy as a hub for scientific research and a key provider of educational services in the naval and maritime fields, both military and civilian, in the Black Sea region and at European level, by fostering academic quality and excellence. To support these internationalization policies and strategies, the Romanian Naval Academy has systematically sought to maximize the funding potential for institutional projects and programs from structural, community, regional, or international funds.

The Romanian Naval Academy’s vision for enhancing the quality of education, training and scientific research processes on international scale has been grounded in the visionary goals set by the European Commission’s 2030 Strategy, which defines the European Education and Research Area and its development imperatives harmonized at the EU level. In this regard, the Naval Academy has pursued the expansion and diversification of its collaboration portfolio with external partners by promoting its educational and training offer in widely spoken international languages and by taking part in various European and international academic or military education and training programs or in the implementation of a wide set of strategic partnership projects. These efforts have continuously strengthened both by the institutional bilateral relations and by the students’ and faculty/staff/specialists’ mobilities and placements, incoming and outgoing.

The internationalization process at the Romanian Naval Academy „Mircea cel Bătrân” has been developed and implemented based on widely recognized academic principles, ensuring institutional transparency, ethics and equity, diversification, embedded by a strong commitment for excellence. The internationalization vision embraced also the Euro-Atlantic principles for integrating national and universal cultural values through various strategic action directions, summarized as follows:

- * Encouraging regional and international cooperation and increasing global visibility by expanding the network of academic and economic partners, as well as by actively participating as member in various international organizations, forums, or associations;
- * Diversifying international mobility opportunities for students (i.e. incoming and outgoing exchanges for studies, internships, and training) and for faculty/instructors/experts (i.e. incoming and outgoing exchanges for teaching and training);
- * Developing international academic or military training programs in cooperation with European and international military partner institutions;
- * Leveraging research and development potential through the implementation of joint actions/projects/programs with international partners, funded by community, regional, or international funds.



Participation of the NAvA delegation in the 20th IAMU Conference, Tokyo 2019



Tehcnical planning meeting for the 22-a edition of ENASC, NVNA, Bulgaria, Varna, 2020



Participation of the NAvA delegation in the iMAF Forum organized by the Military Academy of Portugal, 2021

→ regarding *the enhancement of regional and international cooperation*, the Romanian Naval Academy „Mircea cel Bătrân” has established bilateral cooperation partnerships in the fields of education, training, and scientific research with over 50 similar universities from both the military and civilian areas and with over 60 companies in maritime professional field providing an extensive portfolio for cadetship for civilian merchant marine students. These partnerships span across the European Union, the Balkans, Southeast Asia, and North America.

Beyond these inter-institutional agreements, the Naval Academy has expanded its cooperation imperative by integrating as an active member in relevant regional and international organizations, associations, and forums within the maritime and naval academic field (IAMU – International Association of Maritime Universities, BSAMI – Black Sea Association of Maritime Institutions), as well as in military education and training (ENASC – European Naval Academies’ Superintendents Conference, iMAF – International Military Academic Forum, EU-MACS – European Union Military Academies Commandants’ Seminar, EMILYO – European Initiative for the Exchange of Young Officers).



Participation of the NAvA delegation in the 53rd meeting of the implementation Group of the EMILYO military mobility program, Cyprus, Larnaca 2022

THE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES PROGRAM UNDER THE ERASMUS+ FRAMEWORK

By accessing the academic and professional networks, which encompasses over 100 universities and academies in the naval, maritime, or military fields, the Romanian Naval Academy has diversified and strengthened its cooperative relationships with a significant number of European partners, while simultaneously engaging with a wide range of international partners across all continents. In the last years, international relations have yielded positive effects with substantial added value, reflected in the harmonization of academic practices in education, training, and research in compliance with the international standards. Additionally, they have been further enhanced through the successful acquisition of funding for regional and international projects and programs. This has served as a key driver in promoting the image of both the Romanian Naval Academy and the Romanian Naval Forces on a global scale.

→ Regarding *international academic mobility under the Erasmus+ program*, the Romanian Naval Academy has continuously expanded and diversified its range of mobility opportunities in recent years, offering placements for students (studies, internships, and training) as well as for faculty, instructors, and experts (teaching and training). During the past years, under the Erasmus+ program, the Naval Academy ranked as the top university in the Southeastern region of Romania in terms of total funding accessed for mobility programs and among the top institutions on national level in terms of funding allocated per student.

Currently, the Academy has bilateral institutional partnerships with universities from Europe (e.g. Bulgaria, Poland, Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Lithuania, Latvia, Greece, Norway, Finland, Turkey, Croatia, Slovenia, Portugal, Belgium) as well as from Erasmus+ partner countries (e.g. Albania, Montenegro, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, the United States, and China).

As average numbers, the Academy counts a regular number of 90 outgoing students per year and 50 incoming students per year only for study placements, with an additional over 100 outgoing and incoming cadets for training or common modules attendance.



Mobility for one semester during the academic year 2021-2022 at the Helmut Schmitt German Armed Forces Academy



Mobility for one semester during the academic year 2021-2022 at the Polish Naval Academy



Mobility for one semester during the academic year 2021-2022 at the Maritime Academy of Lithuania, Klaipeda



Mobility of Naval Academy students within the EMILYO program at the Italian Naval Academy, Semester 1, Academic Year 2023-2024.



Incoming international students on mobility at the Naval Academy, visiting TS „Mircea”, October 2023



Mobility of Naval Academy students within the EMILYO program at the Helmut Schmitt German Armed Forces Academy, Semester 1, Academic Year 2023-2024.



Incoming international mobility students at the Naval Academy, seminar of the presentation of Christmas traditions, December 2023



Incoming international mobility students at the Naval Academy, academic year opening ceremony, October 2023

THE INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIP EXCHANGE PROGRAMS UNDER ERASMUS+ FRAMEWORK

For internship placements, the Romanian Naval Academy has enclosed over 50 training agreements with specialized companies in Europe, facilitating the internship of more than 150 students annually aboard European flag vessels, to fulfilling their cadetship requirements.



Cadetship stage aboard merchant vessels under the European flag, within the Erasmus+ program, March 2023



Cadetship stage aboard port container vessels, within the Erasmus+ program, August 2023

As part of the mobility programs carried out, over 250 ANMB students per year have had access to English-taught courses in the naval field (navigation and maritime transport, naval electromechanics and electrical engineering, naval and port logistics), organized by partner universities, or have completed cadetship placements in their field of expertise, implicitly benefiting from the development of transversal competencies in a multicultural and international environment, which enhances their superior integration into the labour market, to the benefit of the economic sector or the Naval Forces.

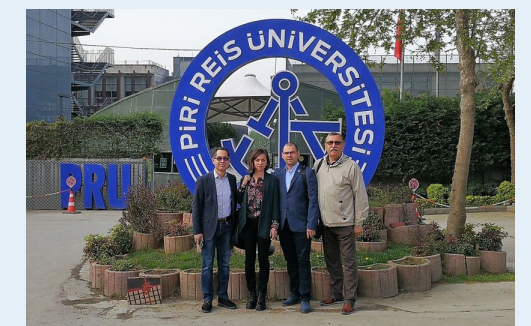
On the other hand, more than 60 faculty members/experts from the Naval Academy benefit annually from teaching or training mobilities at international partners, and in return, a similar number of incoming faculty members visit the Naval Academy under the Erasmus+ KA1 or KA2 strategic partnerships. From this perspective, the Naval Academy „Mircea cel Bătrân” has an extensive experience in internationalization strategy, continuously pursuing the enhancement of student and faculty mobility through the promotion of the Erasmus+ program for more than 12 years, the Erasmus+ Charter for the 2021-2027 period being awarded the highest score in the most recent evaluation.

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC OR MILITARY TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS CONDUCTED UNDER EMILYO PROGRAM

→ Consequently, the Erasmus+ program for international mobility assured for studies, cadetship, and teaching/training stages is systematically complemented by the Naval Academy's involvement in *international academic or military training programs conducted with military institutions at the European or international level*. Thus, military students regularly participate in joint training modules, specialized internships, or outgoing representation programs in partner military institutions, within the EMILYO (European Initiative for the Exchange of Military Young Officers) framework, inspired by Erasmus+, under the auspices of the European Security and Defence College, primarily materialized in joint harmonized semesters between partners for all services, specialized training modules, training camps, sports competitions, training placements aboard partner vessels



Teaching staff of the NAvA on a teaching internship at the Lithuanian Maritime Academy, Klaipeda, 2023



Teaching staff of the NAvA on a teaching internship at the Piri Reis University in Istanbul, Turkey, 2023



Training module for teaching staff organized within the Mar-Lang, Le Havre, 2022



Teaching staff of the NAvA on a teaching internship at the France Maritime Academy, Le Havre, 2022

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS AS PHOTOS

From a statistical perspective, the Romanian Naval Academy currently records a high dynamic of military students' mobility, with more than 80 cadets participating yearly in outgoing international mobilities at European partners in a wide portfolio of training modules (i.e. Leadership, Communication, Cybersecurity, Training on Simulators, Common Security and Defence Policy, Meteorology, Seamanship, Robotics, English language, Winter Training, or International weeks), training placements aboard partner training ships, training camps, nautical competitions, or scientific events/seminars. Alternatively, the institutional offer for incoming foreign students has evolved and diversified significantly in recent years, regularly including, in addition to the study semesters within the Erasmus+ program, training modules (i.e. Naval tactics, Navigation training modules, Training on simulators, English terminology, Physical Training, METOC, Seamanship practice modules), training placements aboard the training ship „Mircea”, as well as various scientific events for cadets (the annual CadetNav and MasterNav Conferences), attended by students from partner countries: Poland, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia, Greece, Turkey, Lithuania, Germany, UK, Portugal, France sau China.



Participation of Naval Academy students in the METOC exercise, organized by the Polish Naval Academy within the EMILYO military mobility program, 2021



Joint international semester organized by the Italian Naval Academy, within the EMILYO military mobility program, Livorno, November 2022



Tactical training module on the Proteus ASTT, organized by the NAvA, within the EMILYO program, April 2022



Naval Academy students on practice aboard the training ships of the Hellenic Navy, July 2023



Participation of Naval Academy students in the international „Leadership training”, Polish Naval Academy, May 2022



International Nautical Competition organized by the Italian Naval Academy within the EMILYO program, Livorno 2021



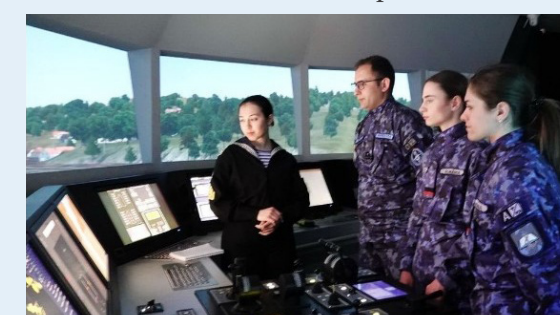
Training module organized by the Polish Naval Academy within the EMILYO program, 2021



Naval training module organized by the Bulgarian Naval Academy, Varna, June 2023



Naval Academy students aboard the training ships of the Spanish Naval Academy during International Week, April 2024



Training module on the navigation simulator organized by the Bulgarian partners, NVNA, Varna, 2022



Naval Academy students at the robotics module organized by the Saint-Cyr Military Academy, Coëtquidan, France, 2021



Naval training module organized by the NAvA at the Naval Training and Water Sports Station, Palazu Mare, June 2023

ANMB COORDINATES AS PROJECT LEADERS: THE NAVY-INS-TECH INITIATIVE

Regarding the curricular harmonization at the European level initiated under the aegis of the ESDC – European Security and Defence College, the Romanian Naval Academy was one of the initiating institutions of the Line of Development 11 (LoD11) concerning the implementation of the International Naval Semester, offered to international partners starting with the academic year 2021-2022. Although, Romanian Naval Academy already provides, through its own portal (adl.anmb.ro), a portfolio of over 80 English-taught courses, implemented over the past five years within the Erasmus+ program.

In the same context, the Romanian Naval Academy has been involved in cooperation efforts within the Lines of Development LoD7 (international projects) and LoD14 (scientific research), as well as in the European effort to harmonize the military curriculum, by being part of the SQF-MILF (Sectorial Qualification Framework for the Military Sector) working group in the field of Naval Forces qualifications. Additionally, the Academy annually organizes the international course „Challenges for Maritime Security”, under the aegis of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), attended by participants from the European Union at the senior management level, as well as guest lecturers from partner academies, NATO experts, or representatives of European institutions.

Starting from 2023, the Romanian Naval Academy is implementing, as a leading institution, the international project „NAVY-INS-Tech: *International Naval Semester Development Applying the Intelligent Technologies and the Innovative Tools in the European Navy Defense System*” (2023-1-RO01-KA220-HED-11F8131F), funded through the Erasmus+ program, KA220 strategic partnerships in higher education, alongside partner naval academies from Italy, Poland, and Bulgaria, during the 2023-2025 implementation period, related to the EMILYO framework harmonization. The project aims to develop a common curriculum in Navy Higher Education Institutions by developing 12 harmonized courses within the consortium, with the major aim to facilitate the implementation of a modular joint semester in European military naval education.



Opening meeting of the NAVY-INS-Tech project organized by the NAVA., January 2024



TRAINING SHIP „MIRCEA” TS: THE HONORARY AMBASSADOR OF ROMANIA

A special place in the international activities and actions of the Naval Academy is held by the Training Ship „Mircea”, an honorary ambassador of Romania on the waters and oceans of the world, with significant regional and international relevance. Through the organization of international training voyages, it consistently and valuably contributes to promoting the image of the Naval Forces training programs regionally and internationally, within the network of ANMB’s partners. Over 20 cadets regularly participate during each year in training voyages for summer training at sea, aboard the Training Ship „Mircea” together with Romanian students, the example of the past joint voyages organized in 2017 and 2018 in partnership with the German Naval Academy being particularly noteworthy (i.e. during these voyages, over 300 German students trained alongside the Romanian Naval Academy’s personnel).

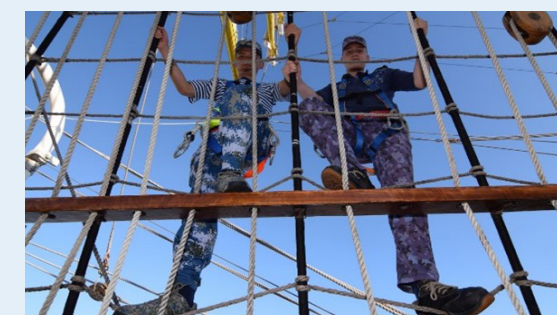
It is also worthy to notice that the Training Ship „Mircea” TS plays a major role in international affairs activities, taking part during the summer voyages to diverse visits and events organized by the partner naval academies from Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, UK, US, Netherlands, and Poland. These visits stimulate the training programs exchanges aboard Navy ships and foster multicultural interactions between Romanian cadets and their European and Trans-Atlantic partners.



Visit lesson of the Polish cadets aboard TS „Mircea”, within the Erasmus+ military study mobility program



Training of the cadets in rigging aboard TS „Mircea”, 2022



Training of the foreign cadets with the Romanian students aboard TS „Mircea”, 2022



Visit lesson of the students embarked aboard TS „Mircea” during its port call in Alexandria, Egypt, 2022

INTERNATIONAL PROTOCOL ACTIVITIES

→ In addition to these educational and training activities, a diverse range of international protocolar actions has been systematically planned through the International Relations Plan or through the Bilateral Cooperation Plan. Over the years, Romanian Naval Academy has welcomed numerous visits from foreign ships carrying cadets on board (approximately 400 visiting students per year from partner academies in Greece, Turkey, and Ukraine) as well as official visits from representatives of international partners. By reciprocity, Romanian Naval Academy has conducted institutional-level working and representation visits at the invitation of its counterparts in similar academies in France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, Latvia, Norway, Lithuania and Poland.



Visit of the Rector of the Romanian Naval Academy „Mircea cel Bătrân” at the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, USA, September 2022



Visit of the Rector of the Romanian Naval Academy „Mircea cel Bătrân” at the Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, UK, April 2022



Visit of the Rector of the Romanian Naval Academy „Mircea cel Bătrân” at the Spanish Naval Academy, Ponte Vedra, Spain, April 2023



Visit of the Rector of the Romanian Naval Academy „Mircea cel Bătrân” to the Hellenic Naval Academy, Piraeus, Greece, June 2023



Participation of the Rector of the Romanian Naval Academy „Mircea cel Bătrân” at the EUMACS Conference, San Javier, Spain, November 2023



Visit of the Commander of the United States Navy, Admiral Michael Gilday, at the Romanian Naval Academy „Mircea cel Bătrân”, January 2023

→ Last but not least, to enhance international cooperation relations, the Naval Academy promotes and actively participates in the implementation of research and development projects funded by European funds alongside its traditional partners. These projects facilitate numerous international activities that directly benefit both students and faculty members/specialists within the academic community, contributing to the exchange of best practices and the modernization of the Naval Academy's educational and research facilities.

In the last years, in addition to the Erasmus+ academic mobility program, the Romanian Naval Academy has intensively accessed available European funds for research, development, and innovation, participating in the implementation of a significant number of international projects alongside various academic and economic partners.

Currently, the Naval Academy reaffirms its role as a catalyst for applied knowledge through projects and programs initiatives. In addition to its portfolio of research and innovation projects, in the past 5 years and in the present, Romanian Naval Academy has been actively involved in 14 international strategic development projects in partnership with institutions from both Romania and abroad, as leading institution of partner, attracting a total of over 2,500,000 EUR in non-refundable European funds, along with additional funds exceeding 800,000 EUR financed through the Erasmus+ academic mobility program.

Among the most relevant initiatives that have been implemented or are in progress, the following projects stand out:

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS



The international project „*MENTORESS: Maritime Education Network to Orient and Retain Women for Efficient Seagoing Services*” (2017-1-TR01-KA203-045739), funded under the Erasmus+, KA207 Strategic Partnerships program, implemented with partners from *Turkey, Poland and Bulgaria*, with the main objective to create harmonized teaching materials on promoting gender equality and diversity management on board maritime vessels;

The international project „*A Joint opened window to the universe mysteries*” (RoBg 528), financed by the cross-border cooperation program, together with *Bulgarian* partners, in the period 2018-2021, with the aim of creating a synergy of information between academia and pre-university, in the scientific field of astronomy;



The European project POCU „*Let's better protect our future! CYBERSECURITY ADVANCED*” (Project Code 133334), financed by the Structural Funds, Human Capital Operational Program, in the framework of which 230 military students were professionally counselled and trained in the field of Cybersecurity (<https://www.anmb.ro/practica-cybersecurity>);

The European project POCU „*INNOVATIVE PRACTICES*” (Project Code 133383), financed by the Structural Funds, Human Capital Operational Program, within which 240 military and civilian students accessed innovative internships in the field of naval and port engineering (<https://www.practicainovativa.ro>);



The international project „*BLUE4SEAS: Strategic partnership for supporting Blue Growth by enhancing Maritime Higher Education maritime cooperation framework on marine pollution and environment protection field*” (2020-1-RO01-KA203-080388), funded by Erasmus+, KA203 strategic partnerships, implemented as leading institution with partners from *Lithuania, Slovenia, Turkey and France*, in the period 2020-2022, aiming at harmonized curriculum developments in the field of marine environment and sustainable development (<https://www.anmb.ro/blue4seas>);

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS



The international project „*SeaSAFERS: Simulation of Sea Accidents For Effective Responses*” (2020-1-LT01-KA226-VET-094834), funded by the Erasmus+, KA226 Strategic Partnerships for the Digitization of Higher Education, implemented with partners from *Lithuania, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria and Portugal*, in the period 2021-2023, with the aim of creating an online database on maritime accidents for the analysis of causes and identification of solutions for crisis prevention and management (<https://seasafer.com/ro>);

The international project „*FAST: Innovative assessments tools and practices for formal education processes for Defense and Public Order Educational Sector – enhanced digital and online methods and technologies*” (2020-1-RO01-KA226-VET-095380), funded by the Erasmus+ program, KA226 Strategic partnerships for the digitization of education, implemented with partners from *Romania, Czech Republic and Bulgaria*, in the period 2021-2023, with the main objective to create intelligent software tools for digital or online assessment of students;



The international project „*MARS-NET: Maritime Simulators and Training Facilities Network for Enhancing the Exchange of Good Practices and Digital Learning*” (2021-1-RO01-KA220-VET-000029412), funded by the Erasmus+, KA220 VET Strategic Partnerships, implemented as leading institution with partners from *Lithuania, Poland, Turkey and Bulgaria*, in the period 2022-2024, with the main objective of creating an international network for the exchange of best practices in the training of cadets on specialized simulators (<https://www.anmb.ro/marsnet>);

The international project „*SEA MENTORS: SEAFarers Experiential Knowledge Based Mentors*” (2021-1-RO01-KA220-VET-000029622), funded by the Erasmus+ program, KA220 VET Strategic Partnerships, implemented as leading institution with partners from *Lithuania, Poland, Turkey, Slovenia and Bulgaria*, in the period 2022-2024, with the aim of creating a digital platform for career counseling and guidance through mentoring of civilian military cadets (www.seamentors.eu);



The international project „*MARINTECH: Romanian – Norwegian Strategic Cooperation in Maritime Higher Education for enhancement human capital and knowledge base in field of maritime intelligent technologies*”, funded by the EEA Grants, Strategic Cooperation in Higher Education, implemented as leading institution in joint with Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Norway, from 2021 to 2023, with the main objective of introducing innovative technologies, robotics, and automation into the maritime curriculum by creating three courses that emphasize these concepts, namely Machine Learning, Intelligent Technologies in Bathymetry, and Oceanography and Marine Robotics (<https://www.anmb.ro/marintech>);

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS



The international project „*HEALTHY SAILING: Prevention, mitigation, management of infectious diseases on cruise ships and passenger ferries*”, funded by the Horizon 2030 program, from 2022 to 2025, with the main objective of developing operational and technological standards for preventing the spread of contagious diseases aboard passenger ships (<https://healthysailing.eu>).

The international project „*MAR-LANG: Linguistic diversity in European Maritime Higher Education Institutions*” (2021-1-RO01- KA220-HED-84C78243), funded by the Erasmus+ program, KA220 Strategic Partnerships in Higher Education, implemented with partners from *France and Lithuania*, in the period 2022-2024, with the main objective of creating a glossary of specialized terminology for ship and port operation in English and French (<https://www.anmb.ro/marlang>).



The international project „*CUL-MAR-Skills: Maritime Soft Skills for Onboard Healthy Nutrition and Culinary Arts in Seagoing Services*” (2023-1-RO01- KA220-VET-DC39A923), funded by the Erasmus+ program, KA220 Strategic Partnerships in Vocational Education, implemented as leading institution with partners from *Greece, France, Turkey and Bulgaria*, in the period 2023-2025, aiming at creating a guidebook on feeding based on principles of multiculturalism and healthy nutrition on board seagoing vessels, respectively developing specific courses on board nutrition in the field of naval logistics.

The international project „*NAVY-INS-Tech: International Naval Semester Development Applying the Intelligent Technologies and the Innovative Tools in the European Navy Defense System*” (2023-1-RO01- KA220-HED-11F8131F), funded by the Erasmus+ program, KA220 Strategic Partnerships in Higher Education, implemented as leading institution with partners from *Italy, Poland and Bulgaria*, in the period 2023-2025, under the aegis of the EMILYO program, aiming at the development of a common curriculum in higher military naval education and the development of 12 courses harmonized at consortium level, in order to facilitate the implementation of a common modular semester at the level of European military naval education.



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