# Romania's Second Patriot Air Defense System Successfully Tested in Live-Fire Exercise



Romania’s second Patriot air defense system is now operational following a successful live-fire exercise. The exercise took place on June 14 at the Capu Midia Training Range in eastern Romania, near the Black Sea. During the drill, the Patriot system, equipped with a PAC-2 anti-tactical missile, intercepted and destroyed an MQM-178 Firejet drone, simulating a cruise missile.

The unmanned MQM-178, developed by U.S. firm Kratos Defense, was launched pneumatically and flown by two C81 turbojet engines, achieving speeds around 200 meters per second over a 60-kilometer range. This exercise was part of the NATO-led Ramstein Legacy initiative, aimed at certifying the Patriot systems as ready for combat.

Romania's Defense Ministry had identified the certification of these systems as a national priority. Following the U.S. State Department's approval in 2017, Romania has purchased seven Patriot systems and related equipment at an estimated cost of $3.9 billion. A special Patriot unit has been formed within the Romanian army, with personnel trained both in the U.S. and locally.

Maintaining operational readiness remains a primary focus, as noted by Romanian soldiers involved in the training. Romania's strategic geographical location, which includes borders with five countries and a significant coastline along the Black Sea, underscores the importance of these defense capabilities.