

# CONNECTIVITY AND MARITIME SECURITY FOR THE 14/3/25 MEDITERRANEAN CONFERENCE

## DATE&VENUE

14/3/2025

RIJEKA, CROATIA

AULA MAGNA,  
RECTORATE

Trg braće Mažuranića 10,  
Rijeka

Working language: English

The University of Rijeka, Centre for Advanced Studies of Southeast Europe, and the Danish Embassy in Croatia are pleased to announce a conference envisioned to encourage greater involvement from academia, industry, and civil society in tackling maritime security in the Mediterranean and NATO's southern neighborhood.

The conference will initiate discussions on establishing an academic network for Mediterranean maritime security, bringing together researchers and academics from NATO and partner countries. By examining the concepts presented in *Understanding Maritime Security* by Christian Bueger and Timothy Edmunds (OUP, 2024), participants will be prepared to assess the role of both digital and physical infrastructure connectivity in enhancing the Mediterranean's maritime security architecture.

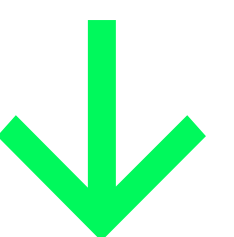
Over 80% of global trade goes through maritime routes, and up to 99% of worldwide data flow is transmitted via undersea cables. The Mediterranean Sea is a crucial crossroads for trade, energy supply, cultural exchange, and geopolitical interactions. However, it also confronts increasing challenges related to maritime security, sustainability, and regional cooperation. Connectivity in the Mediterranean is a double-edged sword; it fosters economic growth and regional interdependence while exposing vulnerabilities in infrastructure, governance, and security systems.

The increasing maritime presence of strategic competitors and adversaries near NATO further strains the connections between NATO's eastern and southern flanks. This is particularly evident in Rijeka, the host city of the conference and home to the largest port in Croatia, which was designated a port of special (international) economic interest in 1996. Following Croatia's accession to the EU, it became part of the EU's core transport network, TEN-T, and a vital segment of the Mediterranean corridor.

As of April 2024, the port of Rijeka has been included in two additional corridors: the Baltic Sea–Adriatic Sea corridor and the Western Balkans–Eastern Mediterranean corridor. This development focuses on long-standing issues, including irregular migration, smuggling, piracy, organized crime, ark fleets, threats to critical maritime infrastructure, cybersecurity risks, environmental degradation, and political tensions. Ark fleets, threats to critical maritime infrastructure, cybersecurity risks, environmental concerns in the Red Sea, external risks to Allied security in the eastern Mediterranean, geopolitical tensions with maritime implications, and the protection of undersea infrastructure remain significant challenges. These issues frequently overlap and compromise the region's stability and prosperity, making collaborative solutions essential.

FRIDAY  
14/3/25  
AULA MAGNA,  
RECTORATE,  
Trg braće  
Mažuranića 10,  
Rijeka, Croatia

TIME	EVENT	DESCRIPTION
8:00–9:00	WELCOME COFFEE	
9:00–9:30	OPENING REMARKS	<p><u>Snježana Prijić Samaržija</u>, Rector, University of Rijeka</p> <p>H.E. <u>Ole Frijs-Madsen</u>, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark to the Republic of Croatia</p> <p><u>Marko Filipović</u>, Mayor of Rijeka</p> <p><u>Izabela Linčić Mužić</u>, Head, Department of Maritime and Transport Affairs, Primorsko-goranska County</p> <p><u>Josip Bilaver</u>, State Secretary for Sea and EU Funds, Croatian Ministry of the Sea, Transport, and Infrastructure</p> <p><u>Dubravka Šuica</u>, EU Commissioner for Mediterranean</p>
9:30–9:50	<u>KEYNOTE LECTURES</u>	<p><u>Dubravka Šuica</u>, EU Commissioner for Mediterranean</p>
9:50–10:10		<p>H.E. <u>Ole Frijs-Madsen</u>, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark to the Republic of Croatia</p>
	Introduced and hosted by <u>Snježana Prijić Samaržija</u> , Rector, University of Rijeka	
10:10–10:40	COFFEE BREAK	
10:40–11:40	<u>ROUNDTABLE</u> SUSTAINABILITY AND MARITIME SECURITY: HOW DO SUSTAINABILITY AND MARITIME SECURITY CONCERNS MUTUALLY SUPPORT EACH OTHER?	<p><u>Ivić Vodopija</u>, Director of Maersk for Southern and Eastern Europe</p> <p><u>Peter Corfitsen</u>, CEO, Rijeka Gateway</p> <p><u>Ana Perić Hadžić</u>, Dean of Faculty of Maritime Studies, University of Rijeka</p>
	Moderator: <u>Christian Bueger</u> , Professor, University of Copenhagen; Director, SafeSeas – Research network for Maritime Security and Ocean Governance; Research Fellow, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)	
11:40–12:25	<u>KEYNOTE LECTURE</u> FUTURE TRENDS IN MEDITERRANEAN MARITIME SECURITY	<p><u>Christian Bueger</u>, Professor, University of Copenhagen; Director, SafeSeas – Research network for Maritime Security and Ocean Governance; Research Fellow, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)</p>
	Introduced and hosted by <u>Sanja Bojanić</u> , Centre for Advanced Studies of Southeast Europe, University of Rijeka.	



FRIDAY  
14/3/25  
AULA MAGNA,  
RECTORATE,  
Trg braće  
Mažuranića 10,  
Rijeka, Croatia

TIME	EVENT	DESCRIPTION
12:25–13:40	LUNCH BREAK	
13:40–14:40	<p><b>PANEL 1</b> CONNECTIVITY AND REGIONAL COOPERATION: HOW CAN CONNECTIVITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA LEAD TO NEW REGIONAL COOPERATION?</p> <p>Moderator: <u>Dora Smolčić Jurdana</u>, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of Rijeka</p>	<p><u>Damir Zec</u>, University of Rijeka <u>Michael Mišo Mudrić</u>, University of Zagreb <u>Ana Odak</u>, MARINN Rijeka <u>Iva Palmieri</u>, Consul General of the Italian Republic to the Republic of Croatia, Rijeka</p>
14:40–15:40	<p><b>PANEL 2</b> MARITIME SECURITY AND BLUE GROWTH: WHAT ARE THE LIMITS OF BLUE GROWTH?</p> <p>Moderator: <u>Katarina Kušić</u>, MSCA Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Vienna</p>	<p><u>Licinia Simao</u>, University of Coimbra <u>Julia Tasse</u>, IRIS, Paris <u>Itamar Mann</u>, University of Haifa <u>Helge Klouman Marstrander</u>, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway to the Republic of Croatia <u>Fausto Ferreira</u>, University of Zagreb</p>
15:40–16:00	COFFEE BREAK	
16:00–17:00	<p><b>PANEL 3:</b> MARITIME SECURITY BEYOND THE MEDITERRANEAN: HOW IS MARITIME SECURITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN LINKED TO OTHER REGIONAL SEAS (BLACK SEA, RED SEA, ATLANTIC)?</p> <p>Moderator: <u>Sonja Stojanović Gajić</u>, Centre for Advanced Studies of Southeast Europe, University of Rijeka</p>	<p><u>Andrej Androjna</u>, University of Ljubljana <u>Pedro Seabra</u>, Iscte–University Institute of Lisbon <u>Giovanni Cremonini</u>, Head of Maritime Security Sector, European External Action Service <u>Mustafa Baškara</u>, CEO, DEHUKAM <u>Trey Lyons</u>, Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. U.S. Embassy Zagreb, Croatia</p>
17:00–17:15	CONCLUDING REMARKS	<p><u>Sanja Bojanić</u>, Director, Centre for Advanced Studies of Southeast Europe, UNIRI <u>Christian Bueger</u>, Professor, University of Copenhagen; Director, SafeSeas – Research network for Maritime Security and Ocean Governance; Research Fellow, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)</p>