

20 Missile Interceptors Deployed in Romania Threaten Russia

Russia denounces Romania and US's 'rushed decisions' on ballistic missile defence

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Romania will inform all neighbours, primarily those who are EU and NATO members, of the implementation of the negotiation process and implementation of the missile defence system.

Russia accused Romania and the US of lack of transparency in the matter of the ballistic missile defence system in Europe on Friday, after Moscow had learnt from the media about decisions of principle in the field.

'We are witnessing again rushed decisions being made in the ballistic missile defence field in Europe', said Andrei Nesterenko, spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry, quoted by Mediafax.

'We are concerned about the fact that we learn about < de principio> decisions regarding the US ballistic missile defence in Europe not from our partners in Washington or Bucharest, but from the press' Nesterenko said. The Russian official also insisted on the fact that such an approach was inconsistent 'with the vision of a partnership on equal footing in the area of ballistic missile defence' Moscow would like to have.

Russia 'has serious questions' about the real objective of the deployment of elements of the new US ballistic missile shield in Europe, he said'. 'We keep having serious questions about the real objective of the US ballistic missile defence system', Nesterenko noted during a press conference. 'We will continue to oppose all questionable and unilateral acts that could have a negative impact on international security', he said.

Romania has recently announced it was ready to host on its territory elements of the US ballistic missile defence system, something that has turned into a new reason for differences between Moscow and Washington. In addition, talks to the US on the subject of the missile shield have suggested the implementation of around 20 interceptors in an 'appropriate' location in Romania and negotiations will most likely last one and a half years, according to Foreign Minister Teodor Baconschi.

Negotiations between Romania and the United States on the ballistic missile defence have been on the agenda of the talks the foreign minister had with his Bulgarian counterpart on Friday on the occasion of PM Emil Boc's visit to Sofia. After the talks, he stated he had informed the Bulgarian counterpart of the decision made by the Supreme Defence Council

(CSAT) of accepting the US' proposal in respect of negotiating an agreement on the implementation of 'a segment' of the US ballistic defence before 2015

'I told him the negotiation process will most likely take one and a half years, that approximately 20 interceptors would be installed in an appropriate location and that Romania would inform all its neighbours, primarily those in the EU and NATO, of the course of the process of negotiation and implementation of the ballistic missile defence', Baconschi said.

On February 4, the US made an official invitation to Romania to participate in the ballistic missile defence project. The message of the US president was brought to Bucharest by Ellen Tauscher, Undersecretary of State for Armament Control. On the same time, CSAT approved the proposal of hosting SM-3 land-based interceptors as part of the Barack Obama Administration's plans for 'a gradual-adaptive approach to the ballistic missile defence in Europe'.

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