



Submarine Escape and Rescue

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## **NATO COMMENCES SUBMARINE ESCAPE AND RESCUE EXERCISE SORBET ROYAL 2005**

An international force of ships and submarines participating in the NATO submarine escape and rescue exercise, Sorbet Royal 2005 (SORO 05) sailed from Taranto Naval Base, southern Italy today. Twenty-four different nations including NATO, NATO partner and non NATO nations are represented in the exercise which is being held in the Mediterranean from 20-30 June 2005.

The primary mission of SORO 05 is to test international submarine escape and rescue personnel, equipment and procedures to cope with the most extreme submarine rescue missions. Attaining this critical mission has many additional benefits.

“The exercise has already proved a success in terms of international co-ordination and co-operation,” says officer conducting the exercise, Captain Steve Szyszka, “because it has brought so many countries together both as participants and observers.”

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Submarines from Italy, The Netherlands, Spain and Turkey will be placed on the bottom, each with a full crew onboard. Rescue forces with a range of sophisticated rescue vehicles and systems from Italy, The United Kingdom and The United States of America, together with specialist divers, medical teams and support and salvage ships from Canada, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and The United Kingdom, will work together to solve complex rescue and medical problems in a variety of demanding scenarios. Air Force units will come from Italy and The United Kingdom. This year, for the first time, detachments from Russia and Ukraine will also be participating in the exercise, as will Israel, a member of the Mediterranean Dialogue countries. It is an illustration of NATO's increasingly global outlook that each time the triennial exercise has taken place, more countries have chosen to participate.

“In the event of an emergency,” says Szyszka, “we can provide the maximum expert capability in the minimum amount of time regardless of what country provides what assets. It's truly a collaborative effort to gain and share the experience, expertise and compatibility so that all of the countries can work together in a real scenario.”

SORO 05 culminates in the final week with a large scale coordinated rescue and evacuation of over 50 survivors from a submarine, including many simulated casualties. Significant emphasis will be placed on the medical problems of removing everyone to safety, as well as the complex logistical and practical problems of compatibility and interoperability between rescue assets, standardisation of procedures and coordination and co-operation between nations, military and civilian organisations.

The exercise is being co-ordinated from a command centre at sea in the Italian amphibious ship San Giusto. The ship has exceptional communications facilities, the ability to operate helicopters and landing craft and sufficient accommodation for the large international staff and the medical teams embarked.

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