

## **Colonel (ret.) Gabriel Rilla**

With a 39-year military career and extensive expertise in defense planning, defense policy, strategy, and international cooperation, Gabriel Rilla served as Head of Division within the Strategic Planning Directorate of the Defense Staff, and from June to August 2025 as Deputy Director of the Strategic Planning Directorate.

From 2020 to 2024, Gabriel Rilla was the Romanian Ministry of National Defense liaison officer to U.S. European Command (US EUCOM), facilitating the strengthening of bilateral relations, capability development, alignment of defense plans, and coordination of support to Ukraine. Previously, from 2012 to 2016, he served as Romanian General Staff liaison officer to the U.S. Joint Staff (J7), supporting bilateral cooperation in capability and concept development, doctrine, training, and exercises. As part of his international experience, between 2006 and 2009, he served as a NATO officer at SHAPE, initially within Allied Command Transformation and subsequently Allied Command Operations, working on partners' defense policy and defense planning.

Gabriel Rilla began his military career in 1986. He is a graduate of the Military Technical Academy, holding a Master's degree in Electronics and Radar Systems, and initially served in missile systems, combat training, and defense resource management positions within the Army Staff. From 1998 onward, he worked in defense planning within the Department for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Defense Policy, contributing to the first Integrated Defense Planning Directive of the Romanian Ministry of National Defense.

Between 2000 and 2001, Gabriel Rilla served as a United Nations military observer with UNIKOM in Iraq–Kuwait, becoming the first Romanian officer appointed Chief of Operations for the Iraq Sector. From 2001 to 2003, he held an international politico-military role within the Secretariat of Romania's first Presidency of the South-Eastern Europe Defense Ministerial Process (SEDM). Between 2003 and 2005, while serving in the Strategic Affairs Directorate, he contributed to Romania's NATO accession and integration process, as well as to the development of defense policies and related projects. From 2005 to 2006, he was seconded to work for the Prime Minister's Adviser on National Security.

A graduate of the National Defense College (2018), Gabriel Rilla completed advanced courses in international security, defense policy, defense planning, and joint operations at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies (Germany), the NATO School Oberammergau (Force Planning, Nuclear Policy), and a NATO course to the U.S. National Defense University. He holds two Master's degrees: International Relations and Euro-Atlantic Integration (National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, 2012) and International Economic Relations (Academy of Economic Studies, 1998).

Gabriel Rilla has been awarded the Honorary Badge of the Romanian Armed Forces, the Honorary Badge of the General Staff, "In the Service of the Homeland" Honorary Insignia for 15, 20, and 25 years of service, the U.S. Defense Meritorious Service Medal (2016 and 2024), and the United Nations Medal for the UNIKOM mission.

[Through the combination of strategic leadership, military expertise, and high-level international experience, Gabriel Rilla offers valuable skills in understanding defense implications in the current security landscape.]

He is married and proud father of two daughters.