

**XIV Trans-Regional Seapower Symposium – Venezia 8-10 October 2024**

*“A spotlight on the depths: the Underwater as the new frontier for humankind”*

*We come from the sea, we depend on the sea*

Panel	ABSTRACT
1	<p><b>Preserving the underwater</b> – the secure and sustainable use of the underwater</p> <p><b>Abstract:</b>                      The underwater environment may come with incredible opportunities, but requires great and shared responsibility for a fair and sustainable development. Underwater mining, new offshore oil and gas fields along with fishing, aquaculture or tourism are just some activities that can be carried out in the underwater environment.                      First and foremost, we must protect and preserve the marine ecosystem, avoiding pollution and preventing uncontrolled and overfishing, ensuring that human activity does not harm marine life. Acting this way, we will be able to sustainably exploit marine resources, preserving them for future generations. How can humankind pursue its legitimate progress without depleting the resources endangering the ecosystem? What can we do to promote a mindful and sustainable use of the sea?</p>
2	<p><b>Safeguarding the underwater</b> – new solutions and technologies for new challenges</p> <p><b>Abstract:</b>                      The underwater is undoubtedly a new frontier for humankind that has to be protected and has significant implication in the defence, security and technological fields.                      It is necessary to invest in an adequate operational structure to effectively ensure its control. This dimension is acquiring increasing relevance due to the presence of critical infrastructures of strategic value, involving military underwater assets and strategic corridors related to energy supply, mineral resources, connectivity and digital communications.                      Thanks to the application of emerging and disruptive technologies, such as for example - underwater navigation, energy storage, innovative propulsion systems and sensing and the capability to perform collaborative autonomy -, the underwater environment has become within our reach.                      A new “gold rush” to an almost unexplored world where Nations and private enterprises compete to gain an advantage, in terms of technological progress, capability development, on such invaluable resources.                      Seabed warfare is already a reality, the North Stream and Baltic Connector accidents show how vulnerable these infrastructures are and how our economy relies on them.</p>
3	<p><b>Framing the underwater</b> – a governance in a complex environment</p> <p><b>Abstract:</b>                      Both the exploration and the exploitation of the underwater and seabed, open new opportunities but also new challenges for the legislators to define an effective and shared legal framework in order to guarantee a peaceful and lawful/legitimate use of this environment. There is therefore the need for an integrated and holistic approach, in terms of vision, of all the key players operating in the underwater environment.                      Due to the increasing number of accesses to the underwater, Italy is establishing a <i>National Underwater Traffic Authority</i> aiming to coordinate and monitor the access to this area. Based on this consideration, moving on an international field, there are some questions to be raised: What set of rules can we lay down? Who is going to manage the disputes?</p>