

## Past and future

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**Abstract:** *I was thinking a lot about choosing this title which at first glance doesn't seem not to be related to the main topic of this article. However, I think these two opposites have the ability to describe in the most subtle form my journey in Istanbul, the city on two continents. The streets covered with history invites you to discover them step by step and the congress showed me a picture of my future when I will have the opportunity to present important projects in front of a selected audience.*

The 18th edition of the Balkan MilitaryMedical Committee Congress was the startpoint. I can say that it remains, so far, the most important scientific event I have participated.

I also had the opportunity to visit Istanbul, a city like a story that I truly recommend everyone to visit. Novelty began for me at the military airport Baneasa when, in a cold morning, I had the chance to see a C17 Spartan military transport aircraft for the first time. I was curious because that type of military aircraft had to take me to destination offering me a unique experience. First flight was quiet and we were greeted in Istanbul by friendly hosts and a beautiful weather. Coach riding to the hotel in the bustling metropolis gave me a chance to admire the panorama for the first time especially because there was quite a distance between the airport and our hotel, the complex where we were accommodated being in Asia. When I reached the destination I had the honor to admire one of the most beautiful hotels

in Istanbul, a true pride of the Turkish army and also a proof of their elite role in society. Beyond the luxury and good taste I noticed again the perfect planning of every detail, starting with accommodation. The Congress began. In the first evening I started meeting my colleagues from other countries during an elegant and discreet reception.

**Beyond the speeches from heads of delegations I was very happy to see that the prize for the best project was awarded to Romania. It was a pride for the whole delegation and we returned to the hotel very happy.**

That was the first time I changed impressions with my fellow military students from the other participating countries. We linked friendships that I'm sure will belong-lasting and we set up a future collaboration for the upcoming congresses, everything in a festive and friendly atmosphere. Beyond the congress I ventured for the first time into crowded Istanbul with my colleague Robert Popescu.

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In the second day of the congress I went for the first time at the Military Museum from Istanbul where I attended the opening ceremony. After visiting the museum, my colleague and I were invited in the hall where the presentations were kept. In front of a huge picture of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk I attended military medical exposures from Serbia, Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania. I started to get ready for my first speech in front of an audience composed mostly of doctors.

Day three was the highlight of the congress for me. Although I knew Robert Popescu was going to present the project with doctors and university students, I was told that my poster will be exhibited in the museum lobby where I should provide clarifications for the numerous questions that might be asked. I admit that things for me were much more effortless but I was

kept up-to-date with the events of the congress thanks to my colleague who was getting ready to present his project. I appreciated the presentations of my colleagues from other countries and together we agreed to collaborate in the future and gather together at these conferences with bigger projects that will integrate more teamwork. I left there convinced that at the next congress I will come with an oral presentation. I gathered the minimum necessary experience to deal with future congress work and I hope I managed to fit in that great atmosphere provided by the hosts. The presentation of my colleague was praised; his experience at previous congresses he attended made a difference. I left there thinking that I fulfilled the task of coping with challenges and building the idea that I can come up with a lot more and improve myself.



Day four was great. It was time to visit the impressive Dolmabahçe, a true monument and one of the most spectacular buildings in Istanbul. That day it was warm, summer was definitely approaching. Many people were gathered in front of the palace, a sign of the importance of that particular place. Huge halls, sophisticated architecture, historical significance and opulence made me think about what many years ago was considered absolute luxury. I recommend visiting the palace along with other major sights of Istanbul.

The evening was one of the most important moments of the congress due to the cruise on the

Bosphorus.

The boat that was waiting for us was state-of-the-art, impressive and equipped with a luxury dining room.

As already expected, we were welcomed aboard with friendship. It was the last moment when I changed impressions about congress with my colleagues from other countries. There were five delegations in the debut of the party but at the end we were a single group with many things in common. That was the moment when we had the chance to know us better than we did before. Seen from the

Bosphorus, Istanbul was like a fairytale. I think one of the most spectacular city's overall images can be seen at night. Picture of opulence was reflected in every detail when I saw the most famous clubs from the city during the cruise.

I went back to the hotel thinking that an experience like that was unique and I rarely had the opportunity to see so much luxury gathered in a single place. Last day brought me back at the military museum which hosted the closing ceremony. Beyond the speeches from heads of delegations I was very happy to see that the prize for the best project was awarded to Romania.

It was a pride for the whole delegation and we returned to the hotel very happy. Those were already

the last hours in Turkey. We started preparing to go back home so we had lunch and then we started packing the luggage. At the airport our plane was waiting for us. After a turbulent flight we arrived back in Romania on a cold and rainy weather, a lot different than the sun and the heat from Turkey.

The experience was unforgettable. I recommend everyone to take part in this kind of event even if they have to deal with oral presentations. I think that what matters the most is participation and the numerous things that you can learn. Since little, brick by brick, experience accumulates and allows overcoming new limits. I hope I gave a good read and I want to thank you for the time you have given me.