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Naval warfare is entering a new era, with surface ships of any kinds creating a ‘system-of-systems’ approach. This is the case of the new generation of surface assets like patrol vessels, for which modularity, growth potential, commonality and interoperability are playing a key role in the 2020s. International shipbuilders follow the strong worldwide trend of this type of surface combatants that offer an ample growth margin enabling ‘fitted for options’ for sophisticated sensors, weapons, integrated platform management and integrated bridge systems, propulsion systems, extra space for shipboard aviation, interceptor craft and personnel, as well as increased endurance. As demonstrated by Italy’s newest surface asset in this field – Pattugliamenti Polivalenti d’Altura (PPA) – this trend is about to shape the future operational environment in particular. (Photo: Fincantieri)