



European Union Naval Force – Mediterranean Operation Sophia

Update: 15 December 2015

Mission

On 23 April 2015, the European Council stressed that the Union will mobilize all efforts to prevent further loss of life at sea, tackle the root causes of the human emergency in the Mediterranean - in cooperation with the countries of origin and transit - and fight human smugglers and traffickers. On 18 May 2015, the Council approved the Crisis Management Concept for a military CSDP operation to disrupt the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean (Council Decision 2015/778 dated 18 May 2015).

As a result, and as part of the European Union's Comprehensive Approach, on 22 June 2015 the EU launched a European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED). The aim of this military operation is to undertake systematic efforts to identify, capture and dispose of vessels as well as enabling assets used or suspected of being used by migrant smugglers or traffickers.

Countering the smuggling and trafficking of migrants is one dimension of ending the human tragedy that we see in the Mediterranean sea. It is also an important contribution to fighting instability in the region that will increase the security of people in the area as well as EU citizens.

Since 7 October, as agreed by the EU Ambassadors within the Security Committee on 28 September, the EUNAVFOR MED mission moved to phase 2 International Waters.

During the phase 2 the EUNAVFOR MED assets will conduct boarding, search, seizure and diversion, on the high seas, of vessels suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking.

Mandate

EUNAVFOR Med will operate in accordance with the political, strategic and politico-military objectives set out in order to:

- *contribute to disrupt the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Mediterranean;*
- *contribute to reducing the further loss of lives at sea.*

In accordance with the Council Decision dated 18 May 2015 the operation shall end no later than 12 months after having reached Full Operational Capability (FOC).

EUNAVFOR Med will be conducted in sequential phases and in full compliance with international law, including humanitarian, refugee, and Human rights.

- The first phase focuses on surveillance and assessment of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean.
- The second phase of the operation provides for the search and, if necessary, diversion of suspicious vessels.
- The third phase would allow the disposal of vessels and related assets, preferably before use, and to apprehend traffickers and smugglers.

The Council shall assess whether the conditions for transition beyond the first phase have been met, taking into account any applicable UN Security Council Resolution and consent by the Coastal States concerned.

MISSION FACTS AND FIGURES



Area of Operation: Central part of Southern Mediterranean Sea

Headquarters: Rome, Italy

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Starting date: 22 June 2015

Operation Commander: Rear Admiral Enrico Credendino (IT Navy)

Force Strength: the composition of EUNAVFOR Med will vary dependent on the frequent rotation and composition of the various warships and other assets assigned to the operation.

The flagship is the Italian Light Aircraft carrier GARIBALDI and the force Commander on board is Rear Admiral Andrea Gueglio (IT Navy). In addition to the Aircraft carrier GARIBALDI, for the second phase of the operation 6 surface naval units and 7 Air Assets will be deployed. For currently deployed units, please see the website:

http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eunavfor-med/index_en.htm

Contributing States: Currently 22 Member States (BEL, BGR, CYP, CZE, ESP, EST, FIN, FRA, GER, GBR, GRC, HUN, ITA, LAT, LIT, LUX, MAL, NED, POL, ROM, SLO, SWE)

Operation Budget: military assets and personnel are provided by the contributing states with the running costs and personnel costs being met on a national basis. In addition, there is a common budget of EURO 11.82 million for a 12 months period, after the Full Operational Capability has been reached, agreed and monitored by the Athena Committee of Member States.

The EU COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

EU NAVFOR MED is part of the EU's comprehensive approach to migration, tackling both current symptoms and the root causes such as conflict, poverty, climate change, persecution. EUNAVFOR MED will help drive a wedge in the smuggling networks that are responsible for the loss of life at sea in the frame of an overall approach, which includes the use of other tools and actions.

Other actions of the EU include:

- increased partnership with the African Union and African regional organizations, countries of origin and transit of the mixed migratory flows, IOM, UNHCR and other partners;
- increased EU presence in the Mediterranean, notably through the FRONTEX operations in the Mediterranean, Triton and Poseidon;
- increased support to border management in the region, including through the CSDP missions, in particular reinforcing EUCAP SAHEL Niger
- improvement of the security/humanitarian/human rights situations and socio-economic conditions in countries of origin – so that people build a future in their country;
- EU efforts and support underpinning regional cooperation frameworks and in particular the Rabat and Khartoum processes;
- cooperation with transit countries in controlling the flows and combat smugglers more effectively;
- building capacities in countries of origin and transit to enable local authorities to tackle the issue more effectively.

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More Information on <http://eeas.europa.eu/eunavfor-med>

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