

# European Union Naval Force - Mediterranean

## ESPS CANARIAS

### Frigate

*Santa Maria class*



Frigate  
Length / Beam / Draft  
Displacement  
Speed

Santa Maria class  
138 m / 14,3 m / 7,5 m  
3,900 t  
29 knots (maximum turbine)

Source: Spanish Defense website

<http://www.armada.mde.es>

## The Ship

ESPS CANARIAS is the sixth frigate of the 41st Escorts Squadron; she was built by Navantia in Ferrol, and delivered to the Navy in December 1994.

ESPS CANARIAS home port is Rota Naval Base in the south of Spain.

ESPS CANARIAS is fitted with a helicopter SH-60 and Marine Boarding Team that completes her capabilities and ensures she is capable of conducting the missions and tasks assigned by EUNAVFOR MED.

The Santa Maria Class is a multirole warship able to carry out missions ranging from high intensity warfare integrated into a battle group and conducting offensive and defensive operations, to low intensity scenarios against non-conventional threats.

Designed primarily to act in the interests of the State in the maritime areas overseas and participate in the settlement crises outside Europe, this leading warship can also be integrated into a naval air force. It may operate in support of an intervention force or protection of commercial traffic and perform special operations or humanitarian missions.

The Santa Maria class frigates, like destroyers and corvettes, are given the generic name of escorts with the main task of protecting other units and maintaining sea lines of communications. However, their versatility allows the F-80 frigates to carry out a wide range of missions, which can be grouped into two broad categories:

- Maritime Interdiction Operations:  
known as 'MIO operations', these consist of shipping control in a given area to ensure the maintenance of safe passage within any given restrictions or regulations as ruled by International Organisations. This is achieved by identifying, intercepting, boarding, searching, and if necessary, the detention of suspect vessels.
- Protection of High Value units:  
we could say that this is the kind of missions for which the frigates were originally designed. However, it is worth noting the changes that have occurred in this area of operations since the construction of the frigates. Initially, the intended task for the 'Santa Maria' class was to act as the ocean escort for battle groups or merchant ships. In such roles, while air and surface threats cannot be discounted, the main threat would be posed by submarines.

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