

PRESS RELEASE

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EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia: mandate extended by one year, two new tasks added

On 20 June 2016, the Council extended until **27 July 2017** the mandate of the EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia, the EU naval operation to disrupt the business model of human smugglers and traffickers in the Southern Central Mediterranean. The Council also reinforced the operation's mandate by adding two supporting tasks: **training of the Libyan coastguards and navy** and **contributing to the implementation of the UN arms embargo** on the high seas off the coast of Libya.

In its conclusions of 23 May, the Council underlined the need to enhance the capacity of EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia to disrupt the business model of human smugglers. The Council therefore decided to add two supporting tasks to the operation's mandate.

1. Training of the Libyan coastguards and navy

The legitimate Libyan authorities requested support in capacity building and training of their coastguards and navy. The objective is to enhance their capability to disrupt smuggling and trafficking in Libya and perform search and rescue activities to save lives so that security in the Libyan territorial waters improves.

2. Countering illegal arms trafficking

A more secure and stable Libya will reduce illicit traffics and thereby contribute to the overall efforts for the disruption of human trafficking and smuggling networks. On the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 2292, the operation will contribute to information sharing and support implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya. This will increase maritime situation awareness and limit arms flows to Da'esh and other terrorist groups.

EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia was launched on 22 June 2015. The operation entered its active phase in October 2015, which enables the identification, capture and disposal of vessels used or suspected of being used by migrants' smugglers or traffickers. Since then, the operation has contributed to the arrest and transfer to the Italian authorities of 71 suspected smugglers and traffickers and neutralised 139 vessels. In addition, the operation has helped save close to 16 000 lives.

The Operation Commander is Rear Admiral Credendino, from Italy. The headquarters of the operation are located in Rome.

- [EU NAVFOR Med \(EEAS\)](#)
- [Statement by the High Representative on the adoption of Resolution 2292 by the UNSC of 14 June 2016](#)
- [Finding solutions to migratory pressures \(background information\)](#)

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