

7 Nov 2016 – Afternoon Sessions Minutes

After a Media opportunity and lunch the 2nd Plenary session commenced with operational updates from:

NATO Allied Maritime Command – Transition from Operation Active Endeavour to Operation Sea Guardian

The operational update by Allied Maritime Command (HQ MARCOM) on the Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) transition to Operation Sea Guardian (OSG), Commander Alexandre Serrano introduced the Command's role within NATO as SHAPE's maritime advisor and as the Headquarters for maritime operations, such as OAE and Operation Ocean Shield (OOS). Of notorious interest in supporting operations the HQ's core task of Maritime Situation Awareness (MSA) in gathering information on the maritime environment to achieve superiority of information. The critical role of HQ MARCOM's NATO Shipping Centre in bridging with non-military stakeholders was underlined.

Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) was described as the only Article 5 operation on anti-terrorism that NATO has ever had. It was initiated in support of the United States immediately after 9/11. It aimed to demonstrate NATO's solidarity and resolve in the fight against terrorism and help deter and disrupt terrorist activity in the Mediterranean

Whilst the OAE mandate, namely helping to deter, defend, disrupt and protect against terrorist activity remains valid OAE's replacement Operation Sea Guardian was agreed at the Warsaw Summit on July 2016.

NATO has now created Sea Guardian, which will respond to threats to maritime security that straddle the boundary between defence and law enforcement. NATO's support to law enforcement under Sea Guardian will contribute to mitigate gaps in the capacity of individual countries to enforce civilian and/or military law at sea. The NATO contribution will be complementary to efforts by other actors.

This new flexible maritime operation called Sea Guardian can perform the full range of maritime security tasks, if the North Atlantic Council so decides which include 7 agreed maritime security operational tasks namely: Maritime Situation Awareness (MSA), security Maritime Capacity Building (MCB), Maritime Counter Terrorism (MCT), protection of Critical Infrastructure (CI), uphold freedom of navigation, Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) and fighting the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

Through Operation Sea Guardian NATO is contributing to the maintenance of a secure and safe maritime environment whilst supporting the Alliance's three core tasks:

- Collective Defence
- Crisis management
- Cooperative security

After over 15 years of providing a security framework in the Mediterranean Active Endeavour has been superseded by an operation with a much greater maritime focus. Operation Sea Guardian is its natural successor having evolved beyond counter terrorism and which has been adapted to a wider range of maritime current security threats being effective and efficient for which a robust response is available if required. Moreover, the experience gained from OAE has strengthened the Alliance's capacity to co-operate with non-NATO countries, civilian agencies and other international organisations. OSG can accommodate the support to other Maritime Security Operations and activities under NATO or another organization's framework.

EUNAVFORMED – Operation SOPHIA – Mandate extension and additional Tasks (embargo & capacity Building)

Captain Bernd Kuhbier delivered the EUNAVFOR MED's operation SOPHIA update starting setting the operation's framework on the disruption of the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Mediterranean. To this effect it is expected the operation to evolve in a future phase which will allow to operate in territorial waters to gain a better understanding of the maritime environment and subsequently be possible to achieve disruption of the criminal activity on a final stage.

A description of the migration flow was made highlighting the major differences between the land route and the sea route. The importance of supporting tasks namely Capacity Building and training of Libyan Coast Guard and Navy; the information sharing and the implementation of the United Nations (UN) arms embargo on the High Seas off the coast of Libya were referred for the potential effect in curbing the migration phenomenon.

Two other aspects of note in this operational update were the expected cooperation between operation SOPHIA and NATO OSG, in areas such as information sharing to enhance MSA and logistic support; and a reference to the numerous stakeholders who are part of the outreach activities adding a challenge in complexity to the coordination required.

Finally, a brief statement with major achievements obtained with operation SOPHIA as follows:

- Effective demonstration of EU Member States political will to counter criminal networks (24 MS participating).
- Identification and understanding of the smugglers' business model both at sea and, partially, ashore, starting from the initial phases of the operation.
- Comprehensive engagement of key regional and international players and organisations achieved.
- Deterrent effect observed in International Waters, S&T freedom of manoeuvre limited to territorial waters.
- **Over 29.000** lives saved directly by ENFM ships.
- **99** suspects apprehended and delivered to ITA authorities.
- **337** boats disposed.

FRONTEX – New Mandate – EU regulation: The transition from FRONTEX into the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and its impact on operations in the Mediterranean Area

Mr. Andreas Lassen delivered the FRONTEX's operational update starting by introducing the organization as a EU policy agency with own legal personality and autonomous budget, referring also the governing bodies that direct the agency and the recent change incorporating the new European Border and Coast Guard Agency as of 6th of October.

As an introduction to the operations run by FRONTEX, Mr Lassen stated that the agency doesn't replace national border management systems and are based on risk analysis, intelligence and proven needs. The European Border and Coast Guard shall implement European integrated border management as a shared responsibility of the Agency and of the national authorities responsible for border management, including coast guards to the extent that they carry out maritime border surveillance operations and any other border control tasks. Member States shall retain primary responsibility for the management of their sections of the external borders.

The presentation went across the diverse areas of operations in which the role of FRONTEX was detailed either as key player or assisting EU Member States. The areas of relevant action are: risk analysis and vulnerability assessment; the deployment of personnel in operations; assistance in returning migrants; situation monitoring, coast guard functions; cooperation with non-EU countries and international organizations; combatting cross-border crime; research and innovation; training and in place procedures to address the sensitive area of respect for

fundamental rights. In all these areas the importance and expanded action of FRONTEX became evident.

A specific operational update on the FRONTEX's Joint Operation European Patrols Network (JO EPN) TRITON 2016, which develops in a similar area as EU Operation SOPHIA, was provided making a reference to the operational aim to implement coordinated operational activities at the external sea borders of the Central Mediterranean region in order to control irregular migration flows towards the territory of the Member States of the EU and to tackle cross border crime. The concept of operations develops broadly in two main areas:

- a. At sea with a focus on border control, contribution to Search and Rescue (SAR) and other activities as required;
- b. After disembarkation to support in identification and registration including documents checks and the collection of information via debriefing activities.

A brief explanation ensued covering the manpower and equipment affected to the operation and a specific mention to the "hotspot" procedure, which was built under European Agenda on Migration integrating a rapid cooperation platform for EU Agencies, with tailored support to Member States embedded in JO, providing a coordination and information structure and implemented liaison with EUNAVFORMED, national authorities and NGO.

A record of the main results of this and other FRONTEX's operations were presented with evidence on the magnitude of numbers presented. To note (in operation TRITON) the number of 441 facilitators arrested and a total of 138.036 people rescued at sea!

Italian Fleet Headquarters –Operation Mare Sicuro

Commander Laghezza delivered the operational update from the Commander-in-Chief of the Italian Fleet (CINCPNAV) on Operation Mare Sicuro.

As an introduction it was referred previous operations of the Italian Navy in the Mediterranean and experience gained throughout. Operation Mare Sicuro was launched on 15th of April 2015 with the main aim to deter and counter illegal activities; to protect Italian coast guard assets involved in Search and Rescue (SAR) operations, offshore installations and Italian fishing activities. Also aims to gather relevant information contribute to MSA and support other operations in the Mediterranean. This operation is developed in the Central Mediterranean and involves permanently 5 surface ships in different states of employment and readiness.

A more detailed view on the procedures and actions carried out along each of the aims of the operation were provided revealing a comprehensive approach in this

operation which with little more than one year has an impressive record on the results obtained. To note the 1.165 human smugglers arrested, the 1617 Search and Rescue (SAR) events and 78.811 migrants rescued in the Central Mediterranean Sea.

As a result of the experience gained from Operation Mare Sicuro it was highlighted the difficult balance the response to SAR incidents create in other missions objectives accomplishment as they tend to be high demanding in assets and in time. Another aspect that became evident from this operation is the need of coordination with all actors and the information sharing to optimize surveillance and patrol.

Not surprisingly one of the recommendations it follows derives from the observation of the profusion of assets from different operations (SOPHIA, TRITON, MARE SICURO, OSG) patrolling the same areas which constitute an evidence of the potential duplication of effort and operational inefficiency requiring a better coordination in the use of the assets available.

Another recommendation was the need to strengthen the information sharing to enhance a common understanding of operational environment and smugglers/traffickers Patterns of Life (PoL).

These updates followed the theme of changes in mandates of the various organizations in light of the realities of the security situation in the Mediterranean Sea.

Upon completion of the panel discussion the participants gathered for a group photo and then divided into nine working groups to further develop the exchange of ideas and formulate ways to improve shared awareness and de-conflict their activities. These WG included:

Working Group 1 – Operational – Share operational and tactical information in real time among different actors

Working Group 2 – Communication and information – Develop a Maritime Security Centre based on SMART web tool

Working Group 3 – Smugglers' Business Model – Understand Smugglers' Business Model, TTPs and their adaptations

Working Group 4 – Effects on countering Smugglers' Business Model – Identify and share ways to counter the smugglers' activities

Working Group 5 – Search and Rescue – Improve coordination of Search and Rescue efforts

Working Group 6 – Migration – Generate common and shared management of the data related to the migration phenomena

Working Group 7 – Legal – Best practices in countering Smugglers and Traffickers. Discuss possible new interpretation of Smugglers and Traffickers crimes

Working Group 8 – Shipping – Increase the situational awareness and mitigate the risk to maritime industry activities

Working Group 9 - Capacity Building and Training Activities in Libya – Mutual information sharing inventory of ongoing or planned activities. De-conflict overlapping activities and coordination of the ongoing planning process.

The WG sessions concluded the day one activities.