

**GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS****Frigate:** Santa Maria class**Length:** 137,7 m**Beam:** 14,3 m**Draft:** 7,8 m**Displacement :** 4,100 t**Speed :** 29 kts**OVERVIEW**

ESPS REINA SOFIA is the fourth frigate of the Fleet's 41<sup>st</sup> Escorts Squadron.

ESPS REINA SOFIA home port is Rota Naval Base in the southwest of Spain.

ESPS REINA SOFIA is fitted with an AB-212 helicopter and Marine Boarding Team that completes her crew capabilities and ensures she is capable of conducting missions and tasks assigned by EUNAVFOR MED Force Commander.

The Santa Maria class frigates, 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:  
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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