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News stories

Operation SOPHIA commander visits the two training ships



Earlier today, [EUNAVFOR MED](#) operation Commander Rear Admiral (UH) [Enrico Credendino](#) paid his first visit to the two training ships, the amphibious vessels [ITS San Giorgio](#) and the [HNMLS Rotterdam](#), accompanied by the Force Commander and the Commander of the Libyan Navy Coast Guard and Port Security, Abdalh Toumia.

For the first time since [seventy-eight Libyan trainees](#) embarked on board the training vessels, both the head of operation SOPHIA and the Libyan counterpart were together to see with their own eyes how the hard work was proceeding.

At present, the trainees on board ITS San Giorgio and HNMLS Rotterdam are studying the first lessons on the basics of Coast Guard skills, and other subjects as English classes and human rights, thanks to the collaboration of representatives from UNCHR. Onboard HNLMS Rotterdam, EUNAVFOR MED commander and Commodore Toumia witnessed a boarding training at sea, and during this training, operation SOPHIA seafarers explained the Libyans how to safely approach a vessel at sea. This practical training was also carried on thanks to the support of the Dutch marines teams and their landing crafts and boats.

[Last 20 June 2016](#), the Council extended until 27 July 2017 operation Sophia's mandate reinforcing it by adding two supporting tasks, the training of the Libyan Navy Coast Guard and the Libyan Navy, and the contribution to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya, in accordance with the UNSCR 2292 (2016). On [30 August](#) and on [6 September](#), the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) formally authorized EUNAVFOR MED to commence the two supporting tasks.

Thus far, following EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia's activities, 99 suspected smugglers and traffickers have been prosecuted by the Italian authorities and 337 boats were removed from the criminal organization availability. Nonetheless, more than 29000 lives were saved at sea.

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