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News stories

Operation SOPHIA training vessel ITS San Giorgio heads back home!



The 14 weeks of Training Package One arrived to an end

From 22 October 2016 to 14 February 2017, the Italian amphibious ship San Giorgio has been involved in the frame of European operation EUNAVFOR MED Sophia. Her main task was to assist the development of the capacities and the training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy in no-combat skills at sea, in particular to counter human smuggling and trafficking.

During this period, the 89 trainees of the Libyan Navy Coast Guard and Libyan Navy completed the first training period thanks to specialized teams of trainers and translators, with the cooperation of other European Agencies such as FRONTEX, UNHCR, IOM and CISOM (Corpo Italiano di Soccorso dell'Ordine Di Malta). Furthermore, the Italian Guardia di Finanza contributed with their patrol boats with the training package one.

The activity lasted 14 weeks, and was divided in five sections. At the beginning with the Dutch ship Rotterdam, the Italian vessel San Giorgio contributed to the training for the entire package one: the first 89 trainees will become future instructors of the Libyan Navy Coast Guard and Libyan Navy. The training was focused on International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights, International Maritime Law, Maritime Safety and Security, Marine Environmental Protection, Search and Rescue, Fishery control, Language skills (English).

In the coming days, San Giorgio will head towards the Italian coasts and join her homeport in Brindisi. Indeed, the training of the Libyan Navy Coast Guard and Libyan Navy does not end: the second package of training in Crete (Greece) has recently started and will be carried on for the following weeks.

Thus far, following EUNAVFOR MED activities, 103-suspected smugglers and traffickers have been prosecuted by the Italian authorities and 387 boats were prevented from being re-used by smugglers. Last but not least, 33.296 lives have been saved at sea. Since the beginning of the contribution to the UN arms embargo off the coast of Libya in September 2016, operation SOPHIA assets carried out 379 events related to the UN arms embargo off the coast of Libya, in accordance with the UNSCR 2292 (2016).

Photo Galleries : Operation SOPHIA training vessel ITS San Giorgio heads back home!

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