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News stories

## **The French ship Commandant Duceing conducts a friendly approach as part of EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA**



Operation Sophia is contributing to the UN arms embargo off the coast of Libya, in accordance with the UNSCR 2292 (2016)

Since 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2017, French light frigate Commandant Duceing is patrolling in Central Mediterranean. The French warship left Toulon harbour on the 4th of January and arrived in the Southern Central Mediterranean, in the high seas off the coast of Libyan, as part of EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia.

The European operation is targeting the migrant smugglers and traffickers but also the illegal arms trafficking, as the EU contribution to the UN arms embargo. As a matter of fact, on 14th of July 2016, the UN Security Council adopted the UNSCR 2292 (2016) condemning the flows of arms to or from Libya, authorizing Member States acting nationally or through regional organizations to conduct inspections, seize and divert vessel suspected of transferring arms to or from Libya. The main aim of this new step is to keep on collecting all the necessary information needed to understand the “pattern of life” of weapons flow in the area.

After one week at sea, the French warship Commandant Ducuing conducted four friendly approaches, that enabled the crew to collect information about maritime activities and security inside the area of operation. This helped to create a network with seafarers working in the area: on a fishing boat off the Libyan coasts, on two sailing boats which were fishing off the Libyan coasts, and onboard a bulk-carrier.

French Ship Commandant Ducuing is the fifth French vessel that participates to this operation. Her protection and intervention team is composed with crewmembers as well as additional naval fusiliers and a dog specialized in the explosive research. All of them are well trained and equipped to conduct the visits.

In the coming weeks, FS Commandant Ducuing will continue her patrols in the high seas off the coast of Libya.

Thus far, following EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia’s activities, 101-suspected smugglers and traffickers have been prosecuted by the Italian authorities and 375 boats were removed from the criminal organization availability. Nonetheless, as the EU contribution to the UN arms embargo, the operation carried on 330 events in accordance with the UNSCR 2292 (2016) and among them, 27 friendly approaches.

## **Photo Galleries : The French ship Commandant Ducuing conducts a friendly approach as part of EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA**

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