

SOPHIA

Sophia was born on 24 August 2015 at 04.15 am on board the German frigate Schleswig-Holstein, operating in the Central Mediterranean Sea as part of EUNAVFOR MED.

Born from a Somali mother rescued together with other 453 migrants and disembarked on the evening of the same day in the harbour of Taranto, Sophia was named after the German ship dedicated to the Prussian Princess Sophia of Schleswig-Holstein

"[...] I will suggest to Member States that we change the name of our Operation: instead of calling it EUNAVFOR MED, I suggest we use the name: Sophia. To honour the lives of the people we are saving, the lives of people we want to protect, and to pass the message to the world that fighting the smugglers and the criminal networks is a way of protecting human life"

Federica Mogherini
High Representative of the Union and
Vice-President of the European Commission

Rome, EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia
Operational Headquarters,
24th September 2015



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More information

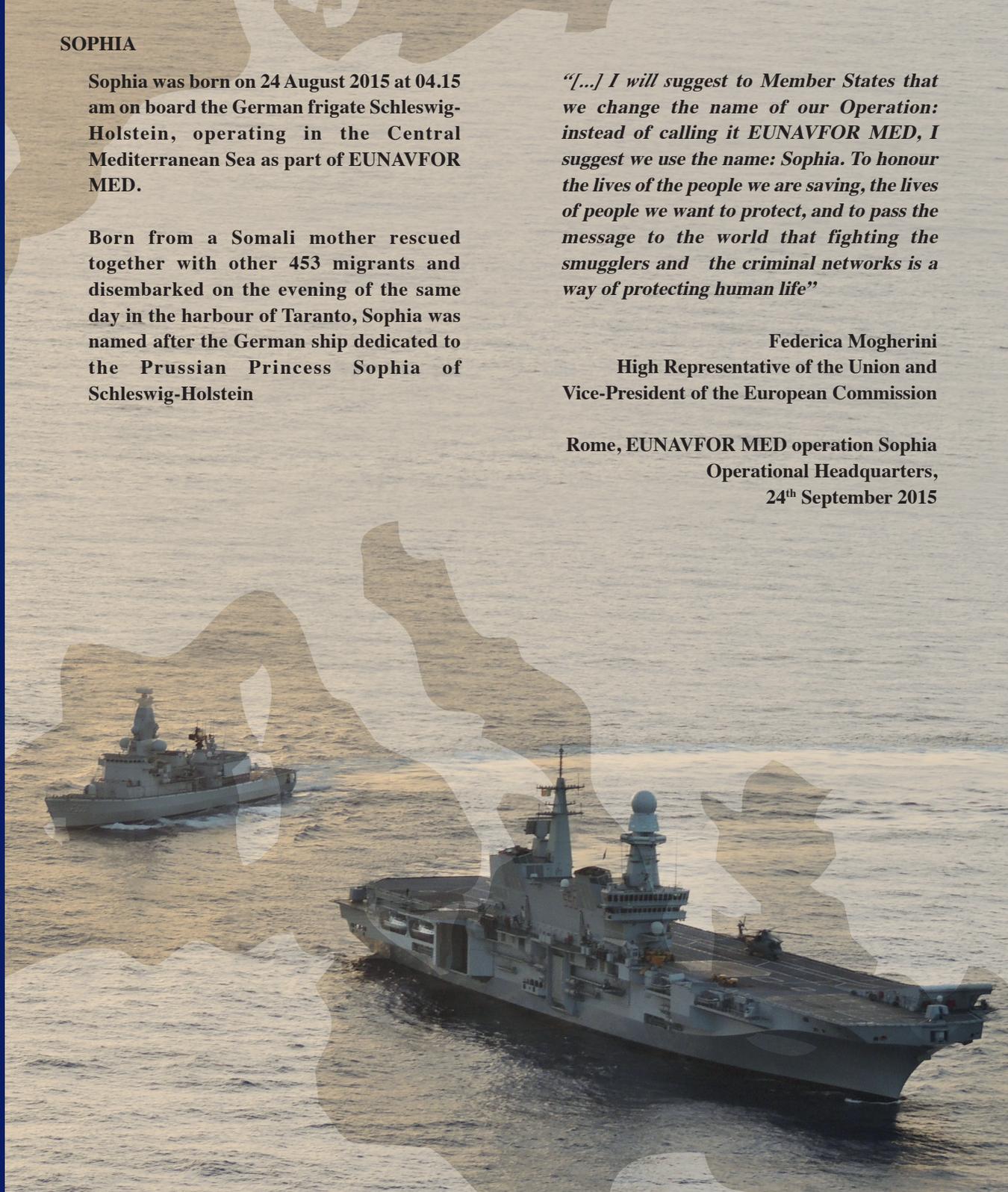
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European Union
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Mediterranean
EUNAVFOR MED



Operation SOPHIA



Road to EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA

“We were together in the headquarters in Rome few months ago. And we are here exactly one year after we saw the tragic loss of lives in this very same sea - it was on the 18 April last year.

In reaction to that tragedy, all the Heads of States and governments of the European Union gathered in Brussels and, after the minute of silence, also took some decisions. Those decisions were to respond in a European way, finally, including a response at sea, to dismantle the business model of the traffickers of people, migrants and refugees, with this naval operation”.

Federica Mogherini,

High Representative of the Union and Vice-President of the European Commission, during her visit to the EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA Flagship,

Central Mediterranean Sea, 15 April 2016

OUR MISSION

EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia (ENFM) is a Common Security and Defence Policy Operation focused on disrupting the business model of migrant smugglers and human traffickers, and contributing to EU efforts for the return of stability and security in Libya and the Central Mediterranean region. ENFM is the first EU maritime force providing maritime security in the Central Mediterranean and works closely with different national, international, governmental and non-governmental, civilian and military organisations. Initially launched in 2015, ENFM is part of the EU’s comprehensive approach to migration. The Operation complements EU actions, which include regional cooperation, policies on migration and asylum, humanitarian aid, diplomatic action, conflict prevention and crisis management.

The mission is to undertake **systematic efforts to identify, capture and dispose of vessels and enabling assets** used or suspected of being used by **migrant smugglers or traffickers**, in order to contribute to wider EU efforts to **disrupt** the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean and **prevent the further loss of life at sea**. Even if “Search & Rescue” is not part of the mission’s mandate, providing assistance to those in distress at sea is an obligation under international law and a moral responsibility for every sailor: no one can be left at sea risking his or her life.

ADDITIONAL TASKS

Council Decision (20 June 2016):

- to train the Libyan Coastguard and Navy;
- to contribute to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya according to UNSCR 2292

(2016).

Council Decision (25 July 2017):

- to set up a monitoring mechanism to ensure the long-term efficiency of the training of the Libyan Coastguard and Navy;
- to conduct new surveillance activities and gather information on illegal trafficking of oil exports from Libya in accordance with UNSCR 2146 (2014) and 2362 (2017);
- to enhance the possibility for sharing information on human trafficking with member states’ law enforcement agencies, FRONTEX and EUROPOL.

PHASES OF THE OPERATION

EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia is designed around four phases:

Phase 1 - deployment of forces to build a comprehensive understanding of smuggling activity and methods. This phase is now completed;

Phase 2 - boarding, search, seizure and diversion of smugglers’ vessels on the high seas under the conditions provided for by applicable international law. This activity will be extended into territorial waters upon the adoption of any applicable United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) and the concerned coastal State consent;

Phase 3 - if requested, taking operational measures against vessels and related assets suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking inside the coastal states territory, with the necessary legal framework established by UNSCR and following coastal state consent;

Phase 4 - withdrawal of forces and completion of the operation. The Council is responsible for assessing whether the conditions for transition between the operation phases have been met. The activities undertaken in each phase adhere to and respect international law, including human rights, humanitarian and refugee law and the “non refoulement” principle.

PARTNERSHIPS

Thus far, partnership has been a key word for the operation, which works with several EU, UN, NATO, national and international partners. Building on this extensive network of contacts, EUNAVFOR MED has established the Shared Awareness and De-confliction in the Mediterranean (SHADE MED). It is a forum where representatives from nations and organisations, both civilian and military, can meet to discuss and share knowledge and deconflict to coordinate their activities related to the migration in the Mediterranean.

