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Press releases

EUNAVFOR MED: operation SOPHIA flagship ITS GARIBALDI rescued over one thousand migrants

Today, 30 August, operation SOPHIA flagship, the Italian light aircraft carrier GARIBALDI was involved in 11 rescue operations and saved 1067 lives. The ship is now headed towards Palermo, the port of disembarkation followed the Italian Authorities instructions. EUNAVFOR MED flagship is expected in Palermo harbour tomorrow in the afternoon.

In the same day, the Spanish frigate Reina Sofia was involved in other 11 rescue operations and saved 1048 migrants and is now directed towards Salerno for the disembarkation of the migrants saved. The Spanish frigate is expected on the 1st of September in the morning.

Operation SOPHIA was launched on June 22 2015. The mission core mandate 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.

Thus far, following [EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia](#)'s activities, 87 suspected smugglers and traffickers have been prosecuted by the Italian authorities and 263 boats have been disposed and – consequently – prevented from being re-used by human smugglers and traffickers. Nonetheless, more than 24.800 lives were saved at sea.

Last [20 June 2016](#) EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia was extended until 27 July 2017. On the occasion, the Council of the European Union also reinforced its mandate by adding two supporting tasks: training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy and contributing to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya. Just today, the Political and Security Committee (PSC) authorized EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia to start two additional above mentioned supporting tasks.

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