

PRESS RELEASE

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EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia authorised to start two additional supporting tasks

On 30 August 2016, the Political and Security Committee authorised EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia to begin two additional supporting tasks:

- **training** of the Libyan coastguard and navy
- contributing to the implementation of the **UN arms embargo** on the high seas off the coast of Libya

This EU naval operation aims to disrupt the business model of human smugglers and traffickers in the Southern Central Mediterranean. The Council decided on 20 June 2016 to **add these two supporting tasks** to the operation's mandate.

After checking that the **necessary conditions have been met**, the EU ambassadors meeting within the Political and Security Committee decided on 30 August to **authorise the beginning** of the new tasks.

Training of the Libyan coastguard and navy

The legitimate Libyan authorities requested support in capacity building and training of their coastguard and navy. The objective is to **enhance their capability to disrupt smuggling and trafficking** in Libya and to perform search and rescue activities which will save lives and improve security in the Libyan territorial waters. This task will be financed through voluntary contributions from some EU member states managed by the Athena mechanism.

Countering illegal arms trafficking

A more **secure and stable Libya** will contribute to the overall efforts to disrupt human trafficking and smuggling networks. On the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 2292 (2016), the operation will contribute to **information sharing** and support the **implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas** off the coast of Libya. This will increase the overall level of awareness of the maritime situation and **limit arms flows to Da'esh** and other terrorist groups.

EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia

EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia was launched on 22 June 2015. The operation entered its active phase in October 2015. This phase provides for the **identification, capture and disposal of vessels** used or suspected of being used by migrants' smugglers or traffickers. Since then, the operation has contributed to the arrest and transfer to the Italian authorities of **87 suspected smugglers and traffickers** and neutralised more than **255 vessels**. In addition, the operation has saved more than **22 000 lives** and has supported other organisations in the rescue of more than **36 000 persons**.

The Operation Commander is Rear Admiral Credendino, from Italy. The headquarters of the operation are located in Rome.

- [EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia: mandate extended by one year, two new tasks added](#)
- [EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia website](#)
- [Statement by the High Representative on the adoption of Resolution 2292 by the UNSC of 14 June 2016](#)
- [Finding solutions to migratory pressures \(background information\)](#)

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