

MISSION

Mission

The European Union is concerned with the effect of Somali-based piracy and armed robbery at sea off the Horn of Africa and in the Western Indian Ocean. Somali-based piracy is characterised by criminals taking control of vessels transiting the High Risk Area in the Region and extorting ransom money for the crew, the vessel and cargo: this bears all the features of organised crime. Crews held hostage by pirates often face a prolonged period of captivity, the average being 5 months, although some hostages have been held for almost three years. Moreover, piracy impacts on international trade and maritime security and on the economic activities and security of countries in the region.

As a result, and as part of its Comprehensive Approach to Somalia, the EU launched the European Union Naval Force ATALANTA (EU NAVFOR) in December 2008 within the framework of the European Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and in accordance with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/piracy/piracy_documents.htm) and International Law.



Mandate

Under EU Council Joint Action 851, which is based on various UN resolutions, Operation ATALANTA:

- Protects vessels of the [World Food Programme \(http://www.wfp.org/countries/somalia\)](http://www.wfp.org/countries/somalia) (WFP), [African Union Mission in Somalia \(http://amisom-au.org/\)](http://amisom-au.org/) (AMISOM) and other vulnerable shipping.
- Deters and disrupts piracy and armed robbery at sea.
- Monitors fishing activities off the coast of Somalia.
- Supports other EU missions and international organisations working to strengthen maritime security and capacity in the region.

On 28 November 2016 the Council of the EU extended the Mandate of Operation ATALANTA until December 2018.



Achievements

Data collated since 2008 demonstrate that EU NAVFOR, in co-operation with her counter-piracy partners, has become highly effective in preventing attacks before they happen.

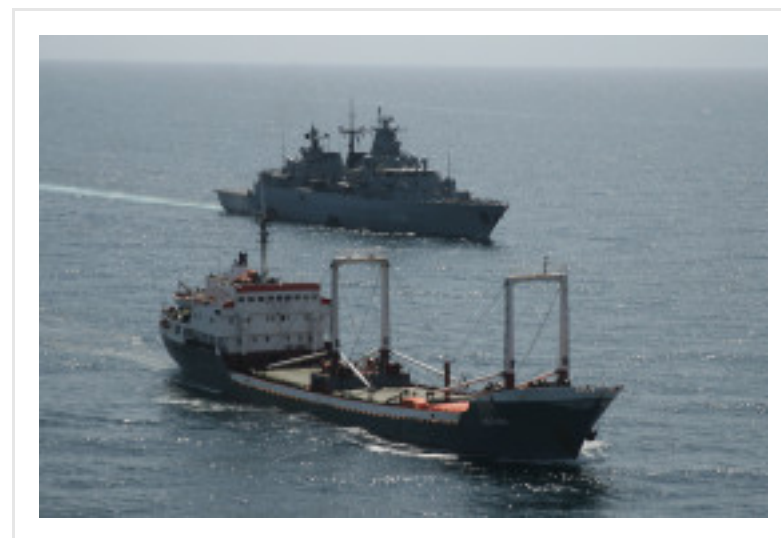
Taken together, intelligence-led operations, a robust and proactive stance, as well as the continued effort to impress upon the maritime industry and the merchant community the importance of self-protection measures, have decreased the success rate of those attacks which are mounted.

At the height of Somali piracy in January 2011, 736 hostages and 32 ships were being held by pirates. By October 2016 that number has dropped to no hostages and ships being held.

Since the launch of the Operation in 2008, EU NAVFOR – Operation ATALANTA has:

- Had a 100% success rate in providing protection to WFP vessels delivering food / aid to the Somali people and to AMISOM shipments critical to the success of the African Union operation in Somalia.
- Ensured the protection of other vulnerable shipping within the IRTC and the High Risk Area.
- Contributed to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia.
- Transferred suspected pirates to competent authorities with a view to their prosecution and conviction as a result of its close co-operation with regional governments such as those of The Republic of the Seychelles, Mauritius and Kenya.

Moreover, EU NAVFOR has conducted and supported numerous Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) rescue missions in the area, helping local, regional and international trading and fishing vessels in distress.



Where and how does EU Naval Force operate?

EU NAVFOR operates in an Area of Operations covering the Southern Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and a large part of the Indian Ocean, including the Seychelles, Mauritius and Comoros. The Area of Operations also includes the Somali coastal territory, as well as its territorial and internal waters. This represents an area of about 4,700,000 square nautical miles

(approximately 8,700,000 square kilometres).

Within the Area of Operations, EU NAVFOR units conduct tasks in accordance with the Mandate. Close co-operation with WFP and AMISOM ensures that no vessel transporting humanitarian aid (or logistics for the African Union mission) will travel unprotected along the Somali coastline.

EU NAVFOR warships also conduct patrols in the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.

Furthermore, warships and Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft (MPRA) conduct reconnaissance and surveillance operations. Warships and their boarding teams routinely conduct visual or physical checks of vessels transiting the High Risk Area.

Meetings with local seafarers, or 'friendly approaches', are conducted to gather a better understanding of maritime practices by talking with the crews of fishing and trading vessels in the region and to make ships' masters aware of the Best Management Practices (BMP) for protection against Somali-based piracy (http://eunavfor.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/bmp4-low-res_sept_5_20111.pdf), i.e. self-protection measures.

A significant objective of EU NAVFOR is the deterrence and disruption of acts of piracy and armed robbery on the high seas. Warships apprehend suspected pirates following intelligence reports of pirate activity or sightings by merchant vessels and MPRA's.

When EU NAVFOR assets locate suspicious vessels, and further investigation confirms the suspicion, the pirate groups will be disrupted. This means action will be taken in order to render a suspected group incapable of further pirate operations. Suspected pirates may be detained with the aim to transfer them to competent national authorities for prosecution. Their equipment is often confiscated for evidence purposes. A disruption of a pirate logistics dump was also carried out on the Somali coastline as part of a focused and deliberate operation in May 2012.

In addition, EU NAVFOR warships regularly come to the aid of vessels in distress, either because of a pirate attack or because the vessel is otherwise in an emergency situation at sea.

EU NAVFOR assets also support UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s programmes to monitor fishing activity in the area.



Who contributes to Operation Atalanta?

Participation in EU NAVFOR goes beyond EU Member States. Norway was the first non-EU country to contribute to the Operation, with a warship in 2009. Thereafter, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine have provided staff officers to the Operational Headquarters (OHQ) and Force Headquarters (FHQ). Ukraine contributed a warship early in 2014, and New Zealand contributed an MPRA asset later the same year.

Means of contributing to EU NAVFOR:

- Navy vessels (surface combat vessels and auxiliary ships, including embarked helicopters)
- Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft (MPRA)
- Vessel Protection Detachment (VPD) teams
- Provision of military and civilian staff to work at the OHQ in Northwood, United Kingdom, or on board units

The composition of EU NAVFOR changes constantly due to the frequent rotation of units and varies according to the monsoon seasons in the Indian Ocean. However, it typically comprises approximately 1,200 personnel, 4–6 Surface Combat Vessels and 2-3 MPRA. For the number of units currently deployed, please see “[Deployed Units \(http://eunavfor.eu/deployed-units/surface-vessels/\)](http://eunavfor.eu/deployed-units/surface-vessels/)”.

In addition to EU NAVFOR units, a considerable international military maritime presence is deployed in the area, comprising the [Combined Maritime Forces \(http://combinedmaritimeforces.com/\)](http://combinedmaritimeforces.com/) (CMF) and independent national units from countries such as China, India, Japan, Korea, Russia and others – all committed to counter-piracy, but with varying mandates and mission objectives.

EU NAVFOR maintains close liaison with these forces to de-conflict and co-ordinate activities within the Area of Operations.



How is the EU Naval Force financed?

Military assets and personnel are provided by the contributing states, with the associated running costs and personnel costs being met on a national basis. In addition, there is a common budget to cover extra costs that are incidental to the Operation (such as travel on behalf of the Operation, specific IT and communication costs, and the costs of medical evacuation). This budget is agreed and monitored by the Athena Committee (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/athena/>) of Member States on an annual basis.

For 2016 the budget will be 6.3 million Euros for the common costs of the mandate.



What is Operation Atalanta's legal basis?

EU NAVFOR is based on Decisions by the Council of the European Union in accordance with relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) and International Law.

Detention of Suspected Pirates

In the Area of Operations, EU NAVFOR units can arrest, detain and transfer persons suspected of intending to commit, committing, or having committed acts of piracy or armed robbery at sea.

EU NAVFOR assets can seize vessels of suspected pirates or armed robbers, vessels captured by an act of piracy or armed robbery at sea, and such vessels which are in the hands of the pirates or armed robbers, as well as the property on board.

The suspects can be prosecuted by an EU Member State, by Regional States, or by any other Third States with which the EU has agreements, and which wishes to exercise its jurisdiction over the suspected pirates. Suspected pirates may not be transferred to a Third State unless conditions relevant to International Law, notably International Law on Human Rights, are met.



Political control, strategic direction and command structure

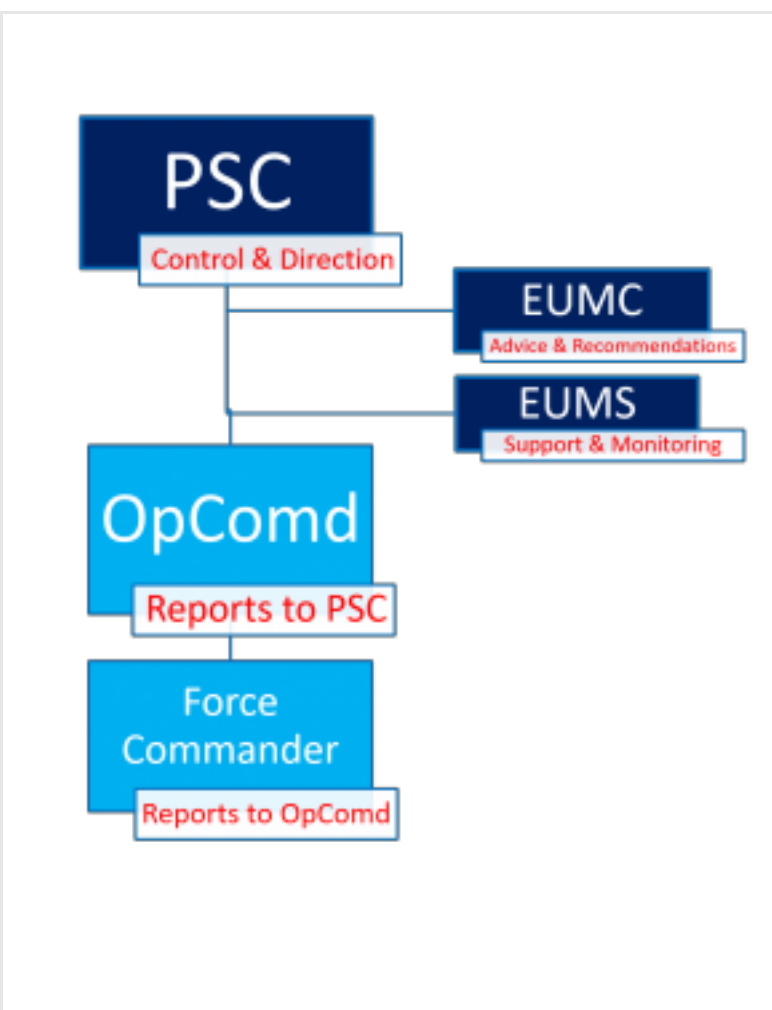
The European Union's *Political and Security Committee* (http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/foreign_and_security_policy/cfsp_and_esdp_implementation/r00005_en.htm) (PSC) exercises political control and strategic direction of this first EU maritime military operation, under the authority of the Council of the European Union (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/homepage?lang=en>) and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (http://eeas.europa.eu/ashton/index_en.htm) (HR/VP), Her Excellency Federica Mogherini. The Operation Commander (Op Comd) of the EU NAVFOR reports directly to the PSC.

The European Union Military Committee (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/european-union-military-committee/>) (EUMC) is the forum for military consultation and co-operation between the EU Member States in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management. It provides the PSC with advice and recommendations on military matters. The EUMC monitors the proper execution of Operation ATALANTA conducted under the authority of the Op Comd. The Chairman of the EUMC acts as the primary point of contact for the Op Comd.

Directly attached to the Secretary-General/High Representative, the European Union Military Staff (http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/structures-instruments-agencies/eu-military-staff/index_en.htm) (EUMS) contributes to the military aspects of the CSDP and provides support, upon the request of the Secretary-General/High Representative or the PSC, for Operation ATALANTA. The EUMS also conducts strategic analysis in liaison with the Op Comd.

The Op Comd (<http://eunavfor.eu/chain-of-command/>) commands EU NAVFOR from the OHQ at Northwood, London (United Kingdom). There he plans and conducts the Operation in conjunction with the political and military authorities of the European Union. The Deputy Operation Commander (<http://eunavfor.eu/chain-of-command/>) (DCOM) exercises command in the absence of the Op Comd.

The Force Commander (<http://eunavfor.eu/chain-of-command/>) (FCdr) exercises command and control of all military forces in the Area of Operations from the Force Headquarters (FHQ) afloat on a flagship contributed by a Member State. He is responsible for the planning, orchestration and execution of tactical military activities, and contributes to the Operational Planning taking place in the OHQ.



The EU Comprehensive Approach against piracy in the Horn of Africa

Somali-based piracy is a complex issue that can only ultimately be overcome by combining political and diplomatic efforts with military and legal action, development assistance and strong international co-ordination. With all these tools at its disposal, the EU is in a unique position to contribute to international efforts.

EU NAVFOR is one part of the EU's "**Comprehensive Approach**", tackling both current symptoms and root causes of the problem. To that end, other CSDP Missions in region include:

EUCAP Somalia:

EUCAP Somalia is a civilian mission augmented with military expertise designed to support regional maritime capacity-building.

EU Training Mission – Somalia

The EU Training Mission – Somalia (http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eutm-somalia/index_en.htm) (EUTM Somalia) is an EU military training mission which aims to strengthen the Somali National Government (SNG) and the institutions of Somalia, by providing military training to members of the Somali National Armed Forces (SNAF).

Together, EU NAVFOR, EUCAP Nestor and EUTM form a coherent, integrated CSDP package supporting the EU's Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa.

Strategic Framework

The EU's multi-faceted engagement in the Horn of Africa is guided by its "Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa" (http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126052.pdf). This defines five priorities for EU action:

- Building robust and accountable political structures
- Contributing to conflict resolution and prevention
- Mitigating security threats emanating from the region
- Promoting economic growth
- And supporting regional economic co-operation

To co-ordinate these efforts, the EU appointed a Special Representative to the Horn of Africa (http://eeas.europa.eu/policies/eu-special-representatives/index_en.htm) on 1 January 2012. He was tasked to focus on Somalia and the regional dimensions of instability in the country, as well as on piracy, which has its root causes in the instability of Somalia.

Judicial international co-operation to end impunity

The prosecution of piracy suspects is a key component of the overall fight against piracy.

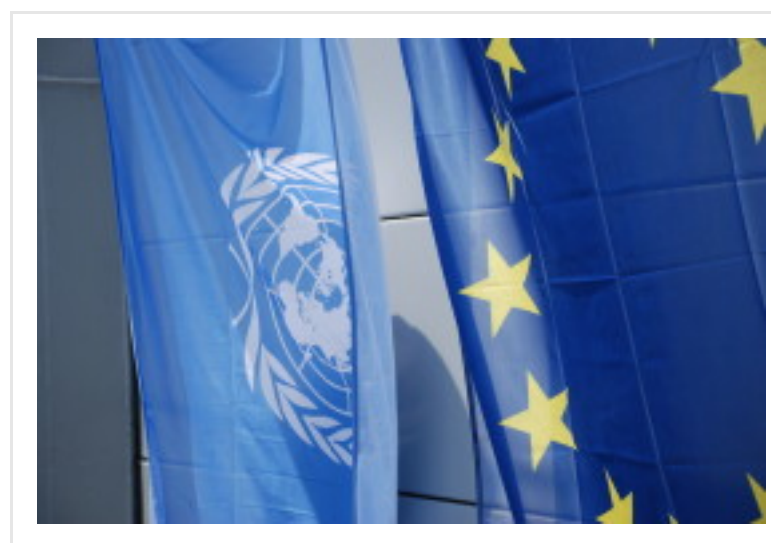
The EU is assisting the United Nations Development Programme (<http://www.undp.org/>) (UNDP) and the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (<http://www.unodc.org/>) (UNODC) in their work to establish sufficient conditions to allow fair and efficient piracy trials in Somalia. Currently transfers for trial from EU NAVFOR ships to Member States or Regional

States remains necessary to put an end to the pirates' legal impunity in the Indian Ocean.

The EU is the largest financial contributor to the [UNODC counter-piracy programme](http://www.unodc.org/easternafrika/en/piracy/index.html) (<http://www.unodc.org/easternafrika/en/piracy/index.html>). A joint EU/UNODC programme supporting the justice systems of Kenya, the Seychelles and Mauritius was launched to provide practical assistance to cope with the extra demands associated with the prosecution and detention of piracy suspects.

Co-ordinated criminal investigation against pirates

Piracy has to be understood as organised criminal activity occurring at sea. It is organised on land, with kidnapping crews and ships for ransom as the business model. In order to disrupt the underlying business model – including the tracking and disruption of the financial flows, it is vital to have a negative impact on the “risk/reward” balance for those who benefit most from piracy. Therefore, EU NAVFOR provides [Interpol](http://www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Maritime-piracy/Maritime-piracy) (<http://www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Maritime-piracy/Maritime-piracy>) with relevant information on Somali-based piracy. Moreover, the EU is actively supporting the establishment of a co-operation mechanism among the prosecutors of the countries concerned.



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Okay, thanks