



EUROPEAN UNION

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

EU naval operation against piracy (EU NAVFOR Somalia - Operation ATALANTA)



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EU NAVFOR/03

The Council of the European Union decided on 8 December 2008 to launch a military operation contributing to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia.

This military operation, named EU NAVFOR Somalia - Operation ATALANTA, was launched in support of Resolutions 1814 (2008), 1816 (2008), 1838 (2008) and 1846 (2008) of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in order to contribute to:

- the protection of vessels of the World Food Programme (WFP) delivering food aid to displaced persons in Somalia;
- the protection of vulnerable vessels cruising in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast and the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast.

This operation - the EU's first ever naval operation - is conducted in the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

Mandate

The principal terms of the operation's mandate are:

- to provide protection to vessels chartered by the WFP;
- to provide protection to merchant vessels;
- to take the necessary measures, including the use of force, to deter, prevent and intervene in order to bring to an end acts of piracy and armed robbery which may be committed in the areas where it is present.



The Rheinland-Pfalz Frigate fends off a pirate attack
(Source: German Navy)

Operational parameters

Rear Admiral Philip Jones (UK) is the EU Operation Commander and Commodore Antonios Papaioannou (GR) is the EU Force Commander, to be relieved in early April by Captain Juan Garat Caramé (ES). The EU Operational Headquarters is located at Northwood, United Kingdom. The Political and Security Committee exercises the political control and strategic direction of the EU military operation, under the responsibility of the Council.

The operation is planned for an initial period of 12 months. At any one time, EU NAVFOR will include at least six frigates and three maritime patrol aircraft. More than 1,200 people will take part in the operation on average. The operation currently has a strength of some 1,000 personnel from 12 EU Member States. The estimated financial reference amount for the common costs of the operation is EUR 8.3 million.

The operation can arrest, detain and transfer persons who have committed, or are suspected of having committed, acts of piracy or armed robbery in the areas where it is present and it can seize the vessels of the pirates or armed robbers or the vessels caught following an act of piracy or an armed robbery and which are in the hands of the pirates, as well as the goods on board. The suspects can be prosecuted either by an EU Member State or under the EU-Kenya agreement, which gives the Kenyan authorities the right to prosecute.



One of the pirates escorted from the German ship to the Kenyan Police
(Source: EU NAVFOR - ATALANTA)

The escorting of WFP ships has made it possible to feed more than four million Somalis in the first three months of the operation. So far, 15 WFP ships have been escorted without any further attack. 81,000 metric tons of food supplies have been delivered by these ships and four more ships are planned for the month of March. A further 40,000 metric tons of food supplies are planned for delivery on those ships.

Operation EU NAVFOR is liaising with naval forces in theatre, including forces from Russia, India and China, as well with organisations that have naval forces in theatre (US-led CTF151 and NATO).

A website is used in coordinating both merchant shipping and military activity. This approach has been welcomed by the merchant shipping industry. Merchant vessels that follow EU NAVFOR recommendations run a much smaller risk of being attacked and/or captured.

Since the operation began, the number of successful attacks has fallen significantly compared to the number of attempted attacks. Almost 95 per cent of the more than 40 attacks since EU NAVFOR vessels - and other ships - arrived in the theatre have failed.

A comprehensive EU approach

Operation EU NAVFOR is part of the EU's global and comprehensive approach to the Horn of Africa, and in particular the Somali crisis, that embraces its political, security and humanitarian aspects.

The EU supports the Djibouti process for peace and reconciliation in Somalia, facilitated by the UN. In this context, the EU welcomed the recent expansion of the Transitional Federal Parliament and the election of President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed on 30 January 2009. President Sheikh Sharif and his newly appointed Prime Minister, Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, are reaching out to all Somalis to strengthen the political process. The EU has called on all parties in Somalia to seize this opportunity to work together for peace, security, stability and development in Somalia.

At the political level, the immediate priority for the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) is to improve the security situation in the country and ease the suffering of the people. The TFG also has the task of delivering a new constitution, adopted by referendum, and of setting up democratically elected institutions by the end of the transitional period in August 2011. The European Union supports these efforts, in particular within the framework of the Djibouti peace process.

The EU and its Member States support the African Union's military mission to Somalia (AMISOM) financially, in terms of planning and through capacity building. The EU is also supporting the Somali police force, including through capacity building, with the aim of increasing its effectiveness and its training and combating abuses and serious human rights violations.

The Joint Strategy Paper for Somalia for 2008-2013 provides an allocation of EUR 215.8 million under the EC 10th European Development Fund (EDF) to cover three main sectors of cooperation: governance, education and the productive sectors, particularly rural development. Through the Instrument for Stability, the European Commission plans to address the issues of security in Critical Maritime Routes in its 2009-2011 indicative programme.



The European Union's **European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)** allows the Union to develop its civilian and military capacities for crisis management and conflict prevention at international level, thus helping to maintain peace and international security, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

More information and background documents available on
www.consilium.europa.eu/esdp and www.consilium.europa.eu/eunavfor-somalia