EUNAVFOR – Operation Atalanta:
Disruption of pirates' logistics in Somalia

On 23 March 2012, the EU Council extended the mandate of the counter-piracy operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta until December 2014. It also decided to extend the force's area of operations to include Somalia's coastal territory as well as its territorial and internal waters. This decision enables EUNAVFOR to carry out focused actions aiming at the “disruption of pirate logistical dumps” (DPLD). By doing so, Operation Atalanta is acting in the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 1851 (2008), last updated with UNSCR 2020 (2011). DPLDs have also been welcomed by Somalia's Transitional Federal Government as well as federal entities, such as Puntland and Galmudug.

These focused operations on pirate logistic dumps are aimed at denying pirates impunity ashore and a secure base to launch attacks at sea, thus increasing costs and decreasing their capability. Putting pressure on their business model by destroying their boats and eliminating their fuel dumps will make life more difficult for the sponsors of piracy and the pirates themselves. In parallel, the EU and its Member States will continue to pursue financiers and people behind the networks.

Operations ashore are aimed at pirates’ supplies and boats, not people, and EUNAVFOR Atalanta will carry out close surveillance to build up a picture of activity ashore prior to any operation. In addition, it is specifically excluded that EUNAVFOR Atalanta personnel go ashore. In many ways, DPLD is merely extending to the shoreline the disruptive actions that are already undertaken at sea.

Thousands of innocent hostages have suffered during the last years at the hands of criminal gangs of pirates. The freedom of movement on the high seas is one of the most long-lasting traditions and the globalised economy relies on unhindered sea routes.
EU comprehensive approach to piracy

The EU is working closely with Somali authorities to increase the pressure on piracy networks, also on land, where the sustainable solution to piracy is to be found. The EU has a political dialogue with the Transitional Federal Government and local authorities to empower them to do more themselves to tackle piracy. It already supports the capacities of police forces and the judicial system in different parts of Somalia, including Puntland. This will be reinforced by targeted support to coastal police forces and the judiciary in Somalia through the future EU civilian mission, EU CAP Nestor, to build regional capacities in maritime security in the Horn of Africa.

The purpose of EU support to the security sector in Somalia is to give Somalis the ability to control their own security and protect their economy. This is why the EU has a comprehensive approach to piracy, embedded in the EU's strategic framework for the Horn of Africa adopted by the Council in November 2011. Our approach deters, disrupts and leads to the prosecution of suspects captured at sea, but our goal is to eliminate the criminal syndicates who run these activities.

The EU considers that only the establishment of the rule of law and economic development will undermine the breeding ground for organised crime in Somalia. The EU is committed to contributing to a lasting political settlement of the Somali crisis. At the development level, the EU is the biggest donor to Somalia, having committed since 2008 more than 400 million Euro from the European Development Fund for governance, security and economic growth.

Links:
Website of EUNAVFOR - Operation Atalanta
Factsheet: The EU fight against piracy in the Horn of Africa
Council conclusions on Somalia, 14 May 2012