European Union Naval Force Somalia
Operation Atalanta
www.eunavfor.eu
## Contents

1. **What is European Union Naval Force Somalia - Operation Atalanta?** 05  
   Mandate
2. **Where and how does EU Naval Force operate?** 06  
   Legal basis  
   Detention of suspected pirates  
   Contributing countries  
   Political control, strategic direction and command structure  
   Financing
3. **Safeguarding trade through the High Risk Area: The Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa (MSCHOA)** 14
4. **The EU’s Comprehensive Approach against piracy in the Horn of Africa and in the Western Indian Ocean** 16  
   Strategic framework  
   Judicial international co-operation to end impunity  
   Co-ordinated criminal investigation against pirates
5. **Achievements** 18
6. **Contact** 20
7. **Links and abbreviations** 22

**Inset**  
Commanders’ CVs  
Facts & Figures
1. What is European Union Naval Force Somalia - Operation Atalanta?
1. What is European Union Naval Force Somalia - Operation Atalanta?

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 bearing all the features of organised crime. Crews held hostage by pirates often face a prolonged period of captivity, the average being 5 months (145 days) but some hostages have been held for almost three years (1001 days). 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 the Comprehensive Approach to Somalia, in December 2008 the EU launched the European Union Naval Force - Operation Atalanta (EU NAVFOR) within the framework of the European Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and in accordance with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) and International Law in response to the rising levels of piracy and armed robbery off the Horn of Africa and in the Western Indian Ocean.

Operation Atalanta is the European Union's counter-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia.

Mandate

Under the EU Council Joint Action, which is based on various UN resolutions, EU NAVFOR’s mandate is to conduct:

- The protection of World Food Programme (WFP) vessels delivering aid to displaced persons in Somalia and the protection of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) shipping.
- The deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the Somali coast.
- The protection of vulnerable shipping off the Somali coast on a case by case basis.
- In addition, the EU NAVFOR also contributes to the monitoring of fishing activities off the coast of Somalia.

On 23 March 2012 the Council of the EU extended the Mandate of Operation Atalanta until December 2014. At the same time, the Council also extended the Area of Operation to include Somali coastal territory and internal waters.
2. Where and how does EU Naval Force operate?

EU NAVFOR operates in an Area of Operation covering the Southern Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and a large part of the Indian Ocean, including the Seychelles. The Area of Operation also includes the Somali coastal territory as well as its territorial and internal waters. This represents an area of about 2,000,000 square nautical miles (approximately 3,700,000 square kilometres). This is an area 1.5 times the size of mainland Europe.

Within the Area of Operation, EU NAVFOR assets 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 into Somalia.

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.

These checks, or “friendly approaches” are conducted to gather a better understanding by speaking with the crews of fishing and trading vessels in the region, and to make Masters aware of the Best Management Practices for Protection against Somali Based Piracy (BMP), i.e. self-protection measures against pirates.

A significant activity of EU NAVFOR is the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea. Units locate and apprehend suspected pirates following sighting reports by merchant vessels and MPRA.

When EU NAVFOR assets locate suspicious vessels, and investigation confirms the suspicion, the pirate action group (PAG) will be disrupted. This means action will be taken in order to render a suspected PAG incapable of further pirate operations. Suspected pirates may be detained with the aim to transfer them to competent authorities to be prosecuted. Their equipment is often confiscated for evidence. Disruption of pirate logistics has also been carried out on the Somali coastline as part of a focused and deliberate operation.

EU NAVFOR warships have 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.

EU NAVFOR assets also support the UN’s programmes of monitoring fishing activity in the area.
How does EU Naval Force operate?

European Union Naval Force Somalia
Operation Atalanta
www.eunavfor.eu
2. Where and how does EU Naval Force operate?

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 Operation, 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 onboard.

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

It is EU NAVFOR policy to always seek a legal finish where possible.

Contributing countries
Participation in EU NAVFOR goes beyond EU Member States. Norway was the first non-EU country to contribute to the Operation with one warship in 2009. Furthermore, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine have provided staff officers to the Operation Headquarters (OHQ) and Force Headquarters (FHQ).

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 onboard 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 1200 personnel, 4 - 7 Surface Combat Vessels and 2 - 3 Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft. For currently deployed units, please see “Deployed Units”.

In addition to EU NAVFOR units, a considerable international military maritime presence is deployed in the area, comprising the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), NATO and also independent national units such as China, India, Japan, Russia and others - all committed to counter-piracy, but with varying Mandates and Mission Objectives.

EU NAVFOR has close liaison with these forces to de-conflict and co-ordinate operations within the Area of Operation.
How does EU Naval Force operate?
**Political control, strategic direction and command structure**

The Political and Security Committee (PSC) exercises the political control and strategic direction of the EU military operation, under the authority of the Council of the European Union and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP). The Operation Commander (OpCdr) of the EU NAVFOR reports directly to the PSC.

The 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 Operation Commander. The Chairman of the EUMC acts as the primary point of contact for the OpCdr.

Directly attached to the Secretary-General/High Representative, the European Union Military Staff (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 OpCdr.

The OpCdr commands the Operation from the OHQ at Northwood, 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 (DCOM) exercises command in the absence of the OpCdr.

The Force Commander (FCdr) exercises command and control of all military forces in the Area of Operation from the Force Headquarters (FHQ) afloat on a flagship contributed by Member States. He is responsible for the planning, orchestration and execution of tactical military activities, and contributes to the Operational Planning taking place in the OHQ.
How does EU Naval Force operate?

PSC
Control & Direction

EUMC
Advice & Recommendations

EUMS
Support & Monitoring

OpCdr
Reports to PSC

Force Commander
Reports to OpCdr
Financing

Military assets and personnel are provided by the contributing states with the running costs and personnel costs being met on a national basis. In addition, there is a common budget to cover extra costs that are incremental to the Operation (such as travel on behalf of the Operation, specific communication costs and the costs of medical evacuation). This budget is agreed and monitored by the Athena Committee of Member States on an annual basis.

The agreed budget for EU NAVFOR amounted to EUR 8.4 million in 2010, EUR 8.05 million in 2011 and EUR 8.3 million in 2012. A budget of EUR 14.9 million is provided for the common costs of the mandate until December 2014.
How does EU Naval Force operate?
3. Safeguarding trade through the High Risk Area: The Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa (MSCHOA)

With up to 95% of EU Member States’ trade (by volume) transported by sea and 20% of global trade passing through the Gulf of Aden, EU NAVFOR gives considerable effort to safeguarding trade through this strategic area.

The Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) situated in the OHQ is an initiative established by EU NAVFOR with close co-operation from industry. The MSCHOA provides 24-hour manned monitoring of vessels transiting through the Gulf of Aden, whilst the provision of an interactive website enables the Centre to communicate the latest counter-piracy guidance to industry, and for shipping companies and operators to register their vessels’ movements through the region.

Owners and operators who have vessels transiting the region are strongly encouraged to register their movements with MSCHOA to improve their security and reduce the risk of attacks or capture. Additionally, the “Best Management Practices for Protection against Somalia Based Piracy” (BMP) and further information can be downloaded from the MSCHOA and EU NAVFOR websites.

A further initiative is the introduction of Group Transits (vessels are co-ordinated to transit together through the IRTC). This enables military forces to “sanitise” the area ahead of the merchant ships. MSCHOA will identify particularly vulnerable shipping and co-ordinate appropriate protection arrangements, either from within EU NAVFOR, or from other forces in the region. EU NAVFOR also conducts focussed operations aimed at achieving specific effects within a given area or time window. By concentrating forces EU NAVFOR can provide influence, deterrence or insight into legitimate activities. Thereby co-ordinating future activities to deter piracy and armed robbery at sea, and thus re-assure legitimate merchant mariners.
3. Safeguarding trade through the High Risk Area: The Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa (MSCHOA)
Piracy in the Region has been a threat to security, international shipping and development since the mid-2000s. Somali-based piracy is characterised by extorting ransom money for the vessel and the crew and bears all the features of organised crime. Piracy is a complex issue that can only 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 the current symptoms and root causes of the problem. To that end, other CSDP Missions in the region include:

**EUCAP NESTOR**

EUCAP Nestor is a European regional capacity building mission aimed at enhancing the maritime capacities of initially three to five countries in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean.

**EU Training Mission Somalia**

The EU Training Mission Somalia (EUTM Somalia) is an EU military training mission which aims to strengthen the Somali National Armed Force (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 the “Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa”. It 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 on 1 January 2012. He was tasked to focus initially on Somalia and the regional dimensions of the conflict there, as well as on piracy, which has its root causes in the instability of Somalia.
**impunity**

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

The EU is assisting the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in their work to establish sufficient conditions to allow fair and efficient piracy trials in Somalia. In the short term, transfers for trial from EU NAVFOR ships remain necessary to put an end to the pirates’ legal impunity in the Indian Ocean.

The EU is the largest contributor to the UNODC counter-piracy programme. 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. It is therefore vital to have a negative impact on the “risk/reward” balance for those who benefit most from piracy and to damage the underlying business model - including the tracking and disruption of the financial flows. Therefore, EU NAVFOR provides Interpol 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.
Data collated since 2008 demonstrates that EU NAVFOR, in cooperation with her counter-piracy partners, has become highly effective in preventing attacks before they happen.

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, has decreased the success rate of those attacks which are mounted.

The number of successful pirate attacks has fallen. Pirates captured 47 vessels and their crews in 2010. By 2011 the number had reduced but 25 vessels were held for ransom by pirates. In December 2012 EU NAVFOR registered four ships still in the hands of pirates. Since 2011 the number of hostages held dropped from a peak of 743 in January 2011 to 114 in December 2012.

Since the launch of the operation in 2008, EU NAVFOR - Operation Atalanta has:

- Had a 100% success rate providing protection to WFP vessels delivering food 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.
5. Achievements
6. Contact
6. Contact

European Union Naval Force
Media and Public Information Office
European Union Operation HQ
Northwood Headquarters
Sandy Lane, Northwood
Middlesex, HA6

Tel: +44 (0) 1923 958693 (UK office hours)
Mobile: +44 (0) 7762 784746 (silent hours and weekends)
E-Mail: media@eunavfor.eu

Follow us on Facebook
Follow us on Twitter
See pictures on Flickr
See videos on Vimeo

Graphic Designer: Carillion Graphics Nwd HQ Terry Truong

Copyright notice
© European Union Naval Force Somalia - Operation Atalanta
© www.eunavfor.eu
Reproduction of the content of this brochure is not authorised without prior permission from the EU Naval Force Somalia Media and Public Information Office.
7. Links and abbreviations

Links

- www.eunavfor.eu
- www.mschoa.org
- www.eeas.europa.eu
- www.consilium.europa.eu
- www.eucap-nestor.eu
- www.wfp.org
- www.undp.org
- www.unodc.org
- www.combinedmaritimeforces.com
- www.mc.nato.int
- www.interpol.int

- EU Naval Force Somalia - Operation Atlanta
- Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa
- European External Action Service
- Council of the European Union
- EUCAP NESTOR
- World Food Programme
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)
- NATO Operation Ocean Shield
- Interpol
Abbreviations

AMISOM  African Union Mission in Somalia
AU       African Union
BMP      Best Management Practices for Protection against Somalia Based Piracy
CMF      Combined Maritime Forces
CSDP     Common Security and Defence Policy
DPLD     Disruption of Pirate Logistic Dumps
ECHO     European Community-Humanitarian Office
EDF      European Development Fund
EU       European Union
EUCAP NESTOR  European Union Maritime Capacity Building Mission
EUMC     European Union Military Committee
EUMS     European Union Military Staff
EU NAVFOR European Union Naval Force Somalia - Operation Atalanta
EUTM Somalia European Union Training Mission in Somalia
IMO      International Maritime Organization
IRTC     Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor
MSCHOA   Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa
MPRA     Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft
NATO     North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OHQ      Operation Headquarters
PAG      Pirate Action Group
PSC      Political and Security Committee
SNG      Somali National Government
SOLAS    Safety of Life at Sea
UN       United Nations
UNDP     United Nations Development Programme
UNODC   United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime
UNSCOC  United Nations Security Council
VPD      Vessel Protection Detachment
WFP      World Food Programme