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 piracy is characterised by criminals taking control of vessels transiting the High Risk Areas in the Region and extorting ransom money for the crew, the vessel and cargo; this bearing all 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 more than two years and eight months (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 (EU NAVFOR) Somalia – Operation Atalanta**

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 UN resolutions, EU NAVFOR’s mandate is to:

- protect World Food Programme (WFP) vessels delivering aid to displaced persons in Somalia, and African Union Mission on Somalia (AMISOM) shipping.
- deter, prevent and repress acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the Somali coast.
- protect 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 21 November 2014 the Council of the EU extended the Mandate of Operation Atalanta until December 2016.
The European Union’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) includes the gradual framing of a common defence policy which might in time lead to a common defence. The CSDP 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. The CSDP includes a strong conflict prevention component.

Based in Brussels, the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) is the permanent structure responsible for an autonomous operational conduct of civilian CSDP operations. Under the political control and strategic direction of the Political and Security Committee and the overall authority of the High Representative, the CPCC ensures the effective planning and conduct of civilian CSDP crisis management operations, as well as the proper implementation of all mission-related tasks.