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P R E S S R E L E A S E

European Union to lead international counter piracy efforts in 2014

From the 1st of January 2014 the European Union will assume for one year the chairmanship of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) with Maciej Popowski, Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service (EEAS) as EU chairperson. The chairmanship of the Contact Group is a joint endeavour of the EEAS and the European Commission and will continue the work carried out in 2013 under the chairmanship of the United States.

While the number of hostages has gone down from more than 700 in 2011 to around 50 today, the European Union is strongly committed to bringing this number down to zero: zero ships and zero seafarers in the hands of Somali pirates.

High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President Catherine Ashton said: "Pirate attacks over the past year have dropped by 95%, but the fight against piracy is not yet won. It is vital that the international community continues to work together to stamp out piracy and consolidate the gains we have already made".

The EU looks forward to working with all stakeholders in the region and with the international community to bring the fight against Somali piracy to an end. This aim reflects the strategic framework and broader objectives set out during the Conference on a New Deal for Somalia in Brussels on 16 September 2013. The eradication of piracy will only be achieved on Somali soil and by the Somali people but the international community needs to keep focus and maintain momentum. As chair of the CGPCS the EU will not lose sight of the humanitarian cost of piracy. Hijacked crews and seafarers that have been taken hostage have suffered the most.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 584 9780- Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu @EUHighRepSpox
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu @AshtonSpox Maja
Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu
Iulia Costea +32 460 75 07 17 - Iulia.Costea@ec.europa.eu

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Background

The Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) was established on 14 January 2009 pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1851 (2008) to facilitate the coordination of actions among more than 60 states and organisations to fight piracy off the coast of Somalia. Since its creation, the CGPCS through increased coordination and information sharing among states, private sector (e.g. shipping industry, insurance companies) and non-governmental organisations has contributed to a marked reduction in the number of pirate attacks and hijackings.

For more information:

Factsheet: The EU fight against piracy in the Horn of Africa

http://www.eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131223_03_en.pdf

EU Naval Force – Operation Atalanta <http://eunavfor.eu/>

Regional maritime capacity building mission EUCAP Nestor <http://www.eucap-nestor.eu/>

Critical maritime routes information portal: <http://www.crimson.eu.com/about/>

Regional Maritime Training Centre: <http://www.edumar.org/>

International maritime Organization:

http://www.imo.org/OurWork/Security/PIU/Documents/PIU_Brochure_1st_edition.pdf
