



Fight maritime piracy with military and state-building, say MEPs

Plenary sessions

MEPs say the fight against piracy off the east-African coast cannot be won by military means alone. In a resolution adopted on Thursday, by 434 votes to 100, with five abstentions, they urge member states to strengthen the EU naval protection force and finance efforts to tackle the causes of piracy. They also call for special courts for pirates.

The EU and NATO should coordinate better to meet the growing threat to international vessels from piracy and armed robbery at sea, particularly off the coast of Somalia and the Horn of Africa. MEPs deplore the fact that EU countries cut the number of EU NAVFOR vessels from eight to only two or three at the start of 2012 and demand "more naval assets to enable the ATALANTA operation to succeed".

Parliament also calls on the High Representative and member states to urgently find ways of liberating the 191 seafarers currently being held hostage and to secure the release of the seven hijacked vessels. They remind regional authorities that "no arrest or detention of a ship may be ordered by any authorities other than those of the flag state."

The Commission and the Council urgently need to work towards shaping an EU approach to harmonize rules on the increasing use of certified armed personnel on board merchant vessels, MEPs say. However, they note that private guards "cannot substitute for the necessary comprehensive solution to the multifaceted threat from piracy".

To combat the causes of piracy, the international community must take a "comprehensive approach to the situation in Somalia, linking security with development, the rule of law and respect for human rights", says the resolution. This includes improving judicial capacity and setting up specialised anti-piracy courts in the region. To dismantle criminal organisations, international money flows and ransom payments should be traced worldwide.

Procedure: Motions for resolutions

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