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Maritime security: EU adopts new action plan for more secure seas and oceans



European ministers on 26 June adopted a revised action plan on maritime security. With the new plan, Europe strengthens its commitment to security at sea – both at home and around the world.

“With this action plan, the EU reaffirms its role as a global maritime security provider,” said EU High Representative Federica Mogherini. “It promotes international cooperation, maritime multilateralism and the rule of law at sea, in line with the strategic priorities identified in the EU Global Strategy”.

“Secure seas and oceans are crucial to Europe’s welfare,” said European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu Vella. “We have made a big step forward recently with coastguard cooperation, and we must build on that success to move on to other forms of collective preparedness. Risks and threats evolve all the time, and this revised action plan allows us to anticipate better, plan better and react better.”

Essential in this revised Action Plan:

- An innovative & holistic perspective on maritime security, encompassing terrorism as well as cyber, hybrid, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats in the maritime domain
- Introducing a regional approach to a global challenge, allowing for tailor-made responses to security challenges in European sea basins and key hotspots such as the Gulf of Guinea and the Horn of Africa
- Protection of critical maritime infrastructure such as ports, ships and energy installations at sea
- Stronger collaboration between civilian and military actors, between different agencies and across borders

The action plan follows on from the European Union Maritime Security Strategy (2014), the first comprehensive framework of common principles for the protection of the EU's strategic maritime interests. Today's update will ensure that the EU response remains fit for current and future challenges in a rapidly changing security environment.

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Promoting global maritime security is one of the key objectives of the revised Action Plan. The Actions foreseen in text contribute to the implementation of the EU Global Strategy. International cooperation with partner countries and international organisations, such as NATO and the United Nations, as well as promotion of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) are priority areas.

- Importance of interagency cooperation. Improved information exchange between the European Fisheries Control Agency, the European Maritime Safety Agency, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and others is critical to ensuring maritime security. Already today, information exchange supports the work of the more than 300 national coast guard authorities as they fight illegal fishing or perform search and rescue activities.
- Increased awareness. Enhanced information exchange between civil and military authorities will lead to increased maritime awareness. This can be achieved by implementing the Common Information Sharing Environment and the Maritime Surveillance network (MARSUR), and by using COPERNICUS for maritime surveillance.
- Security and defence. The action plan contributes to the EU level of ambition in the area of security and defence. The Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), and the future European Defence Fund are key in this respect. Coherence and synergies will be maximised when the EU Member States implement the revised Capability Development Plan priorities also in the maritime domain, and specifically regarding maritime capabilities for multipurpose use.
- International cooperation. Other important issues in the action plan are international cooperation with partner countries and international organisations, such as NATO and the United Nations, as well as promotion of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

See also

Council of the EU Conclusions on the EUMSS Action Plan
European Commission webpage on EU maritime security policy
European Defence Agency webpage on maritime surveillance

www.eeas.europa.eu

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