Dear Madame Ambassador KUMAR

Dear Adm LANBA

Dear PEDRO (Mr Pedro Serrano, Deputy SecGen, EEAS),

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Although my background is from alpine troops, I learned that: anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm.

Well, even if we always wish ourselves: "fair winds and following seas", we know that - if we want to hold the helm in any condition - we need to be able to master troubled waters.

It's a great challenge, but with great challenges, we are always presented with great opportunities.

In the context of the vast region of the Indian Ocean, I truly believe these opportunities are called: cooperation and synergies of effort.

I am truly delighted to be here today, to discuss the vital subject of maritime security, also from my own perspective, as the result of the experience gained in almost 1 year in my current position.

If I look around, I'm really glad to see so many subject matter experts from India, the EU, civilian institutions and the academic world, to analyse challenges, but - more important - to search for converging solutions for the problems in the Indian ocean region.

As for me, for those who may be not fully aware, I lead the EU mc, the highest military body within the EU council, which gives military advice to the political and security committee.

I also have the responsibility of military adviser for the high representative of the European Union. The committee I chair makes recommendations on military matters, and directs military activities within the EU framework, in particular the planning and execution of military missions and operations under the common security and defence policy (the so called CSDP) and the development of specific capabilities.
In the next few minutes, I will give you my general perspective of the maritime domain, from a security point of view, and how it should be seen as a connector, not a barrier.

I will then provide you with an overview of EU's military engagement in this vital domain, with specific references to the Indian Ocean Region.

Finally, I will highlight some of the most tangible examples of how EU and India are cooperating in this field.

The maritime domain.

Although the international community has gone a long way, in matter of sea governance, like with the establishment of the UNCLOS\(^1\) and other rules at sea, it's a fact, the sea remains at unrest: piracy, human trafficking, drugs and arms smuggling, terrorism, illegal fishing, and pollution have brought what we can call "a new disorder".

I can't predict if we will be able to eradicate these threats for good or ever, but we need to tackle them at our best. And quickly.

Why? Because in a way or another, all these security threats are affecting all of us, the free flow of trade, regional stability and, eventually, global security.

We want the sea to be a connector for people, cultures and economies, not a fence to hurdle.

Being the EU surrounded by four seas and an ocean, the maritime domain has logically been high in its agenda since long time. Starting with the Blue Book\(^2\) in 2007, followed by the Maritime Security Strategy\(^3\) in 2014, and the Integrated Maritime Policy in 2017, EU has been demonstrating the willingness to present itself as a unified, committed actor in the global maritime arena, based on the so called "Blue Growth\(^4\)" principle.

But improving sea governance still presents many challenges. I will mention just a few: the need to greatly invest in maritime domain awareness; the acknowledgment that maritime

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\(^2\) The Blue Book Action Plan (2007) refers to a new integrated maritime policy, which truly encompasses all aspects of the oceans and seas in a holistic, integrated approach: EU will no longer look only at compartmentalised maritime activities, but will tackle all economic and sustainable development aspects of the oceans and seas, including the marine environment, in an overarching fashion.

\(^3\) The Integrated Maritime Policy seeks to provide a more coherent approach to maritime issues, with increased coordination between different policy areas. There are 5 cross-cutting policies in the Integrated Maritime Policy where research and innovation plays a large part - blue growth, marine data and knowledge, maritime spatial planning, integrated maritime surveillance, and sea basin strategies.

\(^4\) Blue Growth is the long term strategy to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole. Seas and oceans are drivers for the European economy and have great potential for innovation and growth. It is the maritime contribution to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.
security, blue economy and ocean health are strictly interconnected; the availability of a credible toolbox to implement innovative solutions for new challenges, without forgetting the traditional ones; and, of course and above all, the genuine commitment by all actors involved to use this toolbox, starting from the EU member states.

In this concern, what are we doing, as EU, specifically from a military point of view?

As recently mentioned by Mme Mogherini, the militaries in the EU play a vital role building our defence in a world that is increasingly demanding the EU to be a security provider, not only in our region but also farther away.

EU recently presented an Action Plan built on critical principles like the maritime multilateralism. The plan calls for about 130 immediate actions in areas like: maritime awareness, surveillance and information sharing, education and training.

One of the latest initiatives by the EU is what we call Coordinated Maritime Presence. In simple words, the idea is to take maximum benefit from MS's naval presences to collect and share situational information, avoiding unnecessary duplication of assets, processes and structures.

It's an innovative tool, coherent with similar activities run by NATO, Interpol, UN and third countries.

Speaking of military operations, I would emphasize that two out of three current EU missions are at sea: operation Sophia in the Mediterranean Sea, and - in particular - Operation Atalanta or EU NAVFOR.

Atalanta has significantly contributed to reducing piracy off the Horn of Africa and in the Western Indian Ocean, since 2008, as well as protecting shipping and ensuring the safe delivery of food aid to Somalia.

Referring to Atalanta, it is worth to mention the implementation of the COCOA concept, which includes specific procedures to facilitate third states’ participation in the operation.

I find also paramount to stress that both the mentioned sea operations are linked by EU initiatives on the main land, confirming once more the interdependence of security at sea and on the ground.

Finally, let me say that within their mandate, ships are delivering a strong message just by being deployed in the area. This is what we call, with a comprehensive term, naval

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5 Cross sectional approach, Functional integrity, Maritime multilateralism, Respect for rules and principles.

6 The so-called COCOA Concept derives from the need to enhance season adjusted, minimal CJSOR, taking advantage of permanent/non-permanent EU Military presence in the Area of Operations specifying the requirements of Associated Support to add real value to the Operation. 2 key principles underpin COCOA concept: Predictability and Advanced Planning.
diplomacy: ships become a real strategic and flexible component of that credible toolbox I mentioned before, and their potential needs to be exploited to the maximum level.

So, it is clear that EU is really engaged.

But it is also clear that no single actor can guarantee security on its own, especially considering the huge extension of the seas and the oceans. In this respect, responsibility must be shared.

Every day, EU is investing in external partnerships across the globe. Selectively, but to the maximum extent.

Cooperation is a necessity, but also a fundamental tool for success, not only in the military field.

The nexus of internal and external security is a fact, recognized by the global strategy: the security of our union starts at home, and is strongly interlinked with states and societal resilience, not only to our east and south, but also beyond our strictly-called neighbourhood.

In this concern, EU’s ambition is to act at all stages of crisis, from prevention to response, avoiding premature disengagement.

It is about transforming the system, not simply preserving it.

Of course, this is 100% valid for the Indian Ocean Region, an area of primary relevance for: global trade, energy security, the blue economy and environmental protection. But an area, unfortunately, also affected by many security threats.

It's true, it's a region far from Europe, but let me remind you of the well-known concept of the "butterfly effect"…

Therefore, common security issues must be tackled in a common way, by EU, India and partners, with a strong, convinced and convincing narrative, properly communicated to gain or confirm full legitimacy and support.

In this context, as Chairman of the EUMC and Advisor of the HR, I'm fully playing my part. I would say more: based on my personal experience, the value of using military channels to open doors and establishing a dialogue and cooperation has always proven very effective.

Let me give you some recent examples of military engagements between EU and India:

First of all - of course – the already mentioned operation Atalanta, with practical cooperation, like the recent Indian Navy escort for the safe delivery of humanitarian aid, following a request by EU NAVFOR, last December.
Another example? The fruitful link between the Indian Navy’s Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region, and the Maritime Security Centre – Horn Of Africa (MSC-HOA) established by EU NAVFOR.

If we speak of one-on-one engagements, last February a delegation of EU military representatives was in India for the first time on the occasion of the port visit by a French military vessel, the Cassard, in Mumbai. In addition to that, I recall last June's visit to Mumbai and New Delhi by a EUMS and EU NAVFOR delegation.

We considered these as the possible start for a very productive dialogue, and today's event - I hope - will confirm it.

Finally, I want to mention my recent personal letter to Air Chief Marshal Dhanoa, suggesting we should deepen high level military-to-military dialogue between EU and India.

But this is not all: EU is constantly exploring other ways to build on its existing maritime security engagements.

Dear all, we must keep on building on the cooperation we have achieved so far, with stronger energy and commitment: security is not a self-sustaining asset, au contraire, it is a never ending tasking, demanding persistence and a truly over-the-horizon perspective.

Of course, military cooperation is only one part of the EU integrated approach, which also relies on diplomatic, economic, political, financial, intelligence and law enforcement instruments.

In sum, it's time to make it all real, even if it will be an enormous undertaking, involving many partners across the ocean, a domain - by the way - for which John Kennedy once said: "We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea, whether it is to sail or to watch - we are going back from whence we came".

Let's go back to the ocean and act together!

Thank you again, and wish you all a very fruitful workshop, fair (monsoon!) winds and following seas.