



# MISSION

Update: 02 March 2018

EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia is but one element of the UE's broader, comprehensive response to migration, which seeks to address not only its physical component, but also its root causes as well including conflict, poverty, climate change and persecution.

The mission's **core mandate** is to undertake **systematic efforts to identify, capture and dispose of vessels and enabling assets** used or suspected of being used by **migrant smugglers or traffickers**, in order to contribute to wider EU efforts to **disrupt** the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the **Southern Central Mediterranean and prevent further loss of life at sea**.

Since **7 October 2015**, as agreed by the EU Ambassadors within the Political and Security Committee on 28 September, the operation moved to **phase 2 International Waters**, which entails boarding, search, seizure and diversion, on the high seas, of vessels suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking.

On **25 July 2017**, the Council extended Operation Sophia's mandate until **31 December 2018**.

## SUPPORTING TASKS

Additional tasks have been added to the mandate of the operation since its launch.

On 20 June 2016 European Council added:

- training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy;
- to contribute to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya according to UNSCR 2292 (2016) and UNSCR 2357 (2017).

On 25 July 2017 European Council added:

- to set up a monitoring mechanism of the long-term efficiency of the training of the Libyan Coastguard and Navy;
- to conduct new surveillance activities and gather information on illegal trafficking of oil exports from Libya in accordance UNSCR 2146 (2014) and 2362 (2017);
- to enhance the possibility for sharing information on human trafficking with member states law enforcement agencies, FRONTEX and EUROPOL.

## PHASES OF THE OPERATION

EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia is designed around 4 phases:

- phase one consists of deployment of forces to build a comprehensive understanding of smuggling activity and methods, and this phase is now complete;
- phase two foresees the boarding, search, seizure and diversion of smugglers' vessels on the high seas under the conditions provided for by applicable international law. This activity will be extended into Territorial Waters upon the release of any applicable United Nation Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) and the concerned coastal State consent;
- phase three expands this activity further; up to including taking operational measures against vessels and related assets suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking inside the coastal states territory, with the necessary legal framework established by UNSCR and following coastal state consent;
- finally, the fourth and last phase will consists of withdrawal of forces and completion of the operation.

The European Council is responsible for assessing whether the conditions for transition between the operation phases have been met. On legal side, all of the activities undertaken in each phase adhere to and respect international law, including human rights, humanitarian and refugee law and the "non refoulement" principle meaning that no rescued persons can be disembarked in a third country.





## FACTS AND FIGURES

- Area of Operation:** Central part of Southern Mediterranean Sea
- Headquarters:** Rome, Italy
- Mission Launch:** 22 June 2015
- Mandate Approved until:** 31 December 2018
- Operation Commander:** Rear Admiral Enrico Credendino (IT Navy)
- Task Force's Flagship:** Italian auxiliary ship (AOR) IT ETNA
- Force Strength:** At the moment operation Sophia Task Force can count on 4 ships (1 Italian Landing platform dock, 1 German frigate, 1 Spanish frigate, 1 French frigate), 2 organic helicopters (1 Italian, 1 Spanish) and 4 air assets (2 Luxembourg, 1 Spain, 1 Polish).
- Contributing Member States:** 27 (AUT, BEL, BGR, CYP, CZE, ESP, EST, FIN, FRA, GER, GBR, GRE, HRV, HUN, IRL, ITA, LAT, LIT, LUX, MAL, NED, POL, POR, ROM, SLO, SVK, SWE)
- Operation Budget:** military assets and personnel are provided by the contributing States with the running costs and personnel costs being met on a national basis. The common budget has been agreed and monitored by the Athena Committee of Member States. For the period 27 July 2017 to 31 December 2018, the reference amount for the common costs of EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA shall be € 6.0 million.

## PARTNERSHIP

Partnership has been the key word for the operation: partner countries, partner organisations, NGOs, international agencies are working together and sharing their experiences and best practices.

Building on an extensive network of contacts, EUNAVFOR MED has established the Shared Awareness and De-confliction in the Mediterranean (SHADE MED) seminar. The event resulted in a better understanding between civilian and military actors involved in the Mediterranean Sea, enhancing mutual interaction and assisting with the development of an overall framework for coordinating different activities and to identify best practices to deal with common security challenges.

## SOPHIA

Sophia is a baby who was born on 24 August 2015 at 04.15 am on board the German frigate Schleswig-Holstein, operating in the Central Mediterranean Sea as part of EUNAVFOR MED Task Force. Born from a Somali mother rescued together with other 453 migrants and disembarked on the evening of the same day in the harbour of Taranto, Sophia was named after the German ship dedicated to the Prussian princess Sophia of Schleswig-Holstein (8 April 1866 - 28 April 1952).

"[...] I will suggest to Member States that we change the name of our Operation: instead of calling it EUNAVFOR MED, I suggest we use the name: Sophia. To honour the lives of the people we are saving, the lives of people we want to protect, and to pass the message to the world that fighting the smugglers and the criminal networks is a way of protecting human life"

Federica Mogherini  
Rome 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015

EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia Operational Headquarters,

## Contact details

**European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation Sophia  
Media and Public information office**

Tel: +39 06 4691 9442 ; +39 06 46919451 (IT Office hours)

Mobile: +39 334 6891930 (Silent hours and weekend)

Email: [spokesperson@euohq.difesa.it](mailto:spokesperson@euohq.difesa.it) ; [eunavformed.pi@gmail.com](mailto:eunavformed.pi@gmail.com)

WEBSITE: [www.operationsophia.eu](http://www.operationsophia.eu)