

KEYNOTE SPEECH DJIBOUTI CODE OF CONDUCT HIGH LEVEL MEETING

22 NOVEMBER 2022, AT JEDDAH KSA

- Mr Chairman, dear honourable participants, ladies and gentlemen
- I feel truly honoured to provide the keynote speech for the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) High-Level Meeting in my new capacity as European Union Senior Coordinator of the Coordinated Maritime Presence (or CMP) in the North Western Indian Ocean.
- The CMP concept was created to strengthen EU maritime security engagement around the world. The North Western Indian Ocean is the second maritime area of interest (MAI) following CMP in the gulf of Guinea.

Brief explanation of the CMP concept: It is not an operation (such as Atalanta) and not a mission. It is a flexible tool. It uses EU MS naval and air assets in a defined area that will be deployed on a voluntary basis to ensure continuous EU maritime presence.

This enhances our awareness, analysis and information sharing between EU MS through a dedicated Maritime Area of Interest Coordination Cell. I am pleased that Mr [redacted] who runs this cell is with us today.

EU Foreign Ministers have chosen the NWIO as our second MAI given that this area (i) is a centre of economic growth, (ii) is a crucial link between Europa and Asia, (iii) is a transport route for 80% of global trade and (iv) we already have two operations in the area Atalanta and EMASoH in the Strait of Hormuz.

- The NWIO encompasses a maritime space that covers the area from the Strait of Hormuz to the Southern Tropic and from the Red Sea along the coast of Eastern Africa to the centre of the Indian Ocean. The Maritime Area of Interest thus includes five regional choke points: Strait of Hormuz, Strait of Barb al-Mandab, Suez Canal, Mozambique Channel and Nine Degree Channel.

In short: Through the CMP initiative we want to

- Increase EU capacity and efficiency as a maritime security provider
- Ensure permanent maritime presence and outreach
- Achieve greater European operational engagement and
- Promote international cooperation and partnership at sea including increased cooperation with coastal states at large

Today I want to speak about 3 issues: (i) the current maritime security environment, (ii) the EU as a security provider and (iii) the EU's cooperation programmes.

(I) Let me start with maritime security – the key focus of this conference

- With 90 per cent of world trade transiting through sea-lanes, there is no doubt maritime security is today an international priority. The EU has a strong interest in keeping trade routes open, ensuring safe and lawful use of maritime natural resources, fighting organised crime, illicit trafficking and terrorism. And, as the latest incidents show, to

protect sub-merged sea cables and pipelines. We also want to contribute to lower tensions in key strategic areas. In addition, environmental protection is of global relevance.

- I take this opportunity to confirm, the continuous EU support to preserving maritime security - built on the success of suppressing piracy in the North Western Indian Ocean.
- Maritime security is in all our interest, but it can be maintained only when based on cooperation. The EU therefore promotes all international efforts such as under the Djibouti Code of Conduct to safeguard maritime routes and trade links.
- However, new kinds of maritime hybrid and cyber threats are evolving. Illicit trafficking in drugs, arms and humans has become endemic.
- These criminal activities often benefit terrorist groups.
- The EU therefore welcomes that in 2017 the Djibouti Code of Conduct countries broadened their mission to include combatting illicit trafficking and a whole range of other concrete threats. The EU supports you in your efforts.
- Regarding new maritime security threats, we have observed the following trends:
 - A rise in hybrid activities, including disinformation, sea and air drone attacks, and attacks in cyberspace.
 - Attacks against vulnerable sub-merged sea cables and infrastructure
 - Increase of transnational terrorism links.

- Increase in illicit drug and arms and human trafficking, illegal oil deals and illegal fishing.
- A temporary decline in piracy and kidnapping for ransom - a trend however that can be reversed at any time should the economic circumstances change or the international community discontinue its successful anti-piracy surveillance.
- These new maritime hybrid and cyber threats are growing in both frequency and impact, exploiting new modalities and new technologies, targeting maritime infrastructure, which is increasingly dependent on digital technologies.
- We have witnessed in the region a first wave of drone attacks against commercial vessels.
- Individual cases of hybrid threats or attacks are designed to remain below the radar. However, collectively they do have a significant impact. It is therefore essential to obtain the capabilities to pre-empt, prevent and respond. Again, one country or organization alone cannot address these challenges. The efforts must be collective and multinational.

This brings me to my second point:

(II) The EU's engagement in the region

- The EU is a global maritime security provider, and a leader in maritime situational awareness. The EU continues to be a strong advocate of the Djibouti Code of Conduct and the Jeddah Amendment and supports national and regional capacity building to address wider maritime security issues.

- Due to regional and international efforts, piracy incidents have declined sharply in the North West Indian Ocean.
- Europe has longstanding political and economic ties with this strategically important region. We are fully committed to deepen our partnership.
- Our engagement is based on a long-term strategic outlook that includes the Horn of Africa Strategy; the broader Indo-Pacific Strategy launched this year, the Strategic Partnership with the Gulf, and the EU Global Gateways initiative.
- These strategies aim to reduce instability, promote democracy and sustainable growth, boost trade and foster regional integration.
- One critical aspect of these strategies is to work with our partners to ensure the security and safety of their maritime spaces.
- In that context, the EU is in the process of prolonging the very successful Operation ATALANTA mandate and possibly extending it. Furthermore, the EU has strengthened regional maritime domain awareness through capability and capacity building efforts with Commission regional maritime security programmes.
- This brings me to my last point:
- **(III) EU cooperation programs for NWIO**
- Over the last decade, the EU Commission has allocated altogether 123 million € for five separate programs aimed at enhancing maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean Region. These five programs are:
 - (i) Maritime Security (MASE) program to promote regional maritime security;

- (ii) the Port Security and Safety of Navigation in Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean – program
 - (iii) the Regional Programme for Maritime Security in the Red Sea Area;
 - (iv) the Coastal Economic Development in Kenya (Go Blue) – program, and
 - (v) the Critical Maritime Routes in the Indo-Pacific II (CRIMARIO II) – program.
- With the latter the EU offers partner countries a way to strengthen cooperation on maritime domain awareness in the Indian Ocean rim and in Southeast Asia.
- Apart from the IORIS platform, additional activities will be provided to increase law enforcement capacities, encouraging cross-sectorial and interregional approaches in maritime surveillance and policing.
 - CRIMARIO II pursues two main objectives: (1) enhancing information exchange and analysis, and crisis/incident management; (2) strengthening inter-agency cooperation in maritime surveillance, policing, investigation and judicial matters.
 - A more detailed discussion on the EU programs and also on the Crimario project with its flagship platform IORIS (Indian Ocean Regional Information Sharing) will be held during this conference and I am pleased to see that we have excellent speakers who have joined me for this from Brussels.

CONCLUSIONS

- The Coordinated Maritime Presence in the North Western Indian Ocean is part of a broader EU Indo-Pacific Strategy from the Horn of Africa to the Pacific Islands.
- It is based on the EU Maritime Security Strategy and the EU Global Gateways initiative.
- This means that the EU is in region to stay as a partner. We share common maritime interests and concerns. The Western Indian Ocean will remain a centre of global growth and maritime trade.
- And we believe in local ownership on maritime security.
- But...
- "*Freedom of navigation is not for free*" - Securing the freedom of the seas for global trade requires commitment and decisive action from all of us.
- Without security, there will be no freedom of navigation and without freedom of navigation, there will be no security.
- We must be willing to make our contribution to this, to create the necessary structures and to back them up with sufficient resources in the long term.
- Finally, I would like to repeat what I said in the beginning.
- Having been successful in suppressing the scourge of piracy, we all face new kind of threats that affect us all. Therefore, the EU

appreciates that the Djibouti Code of Conduct countries expanded their mission to cover new kind of threats and illicit trafficking.

- EU is fully prepared to support you in your efforts.
- I wish you all a very fruitful meeting and hope this conference will inspire even greater cooperation among DCoC signatory States, as well as with the EU.
- Thank you for your attention.