



DCOC HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JEDDAH AMENDMENT TO DJIBOUTI CODE OF CONDUCT

INTERCONTINENTAL HOTELS GROUP DUBAI FESTIVAL CITY

28 – 30 JUNE 2022

OPENING REMARKS BY EU AMBASSADOR ANDREA MATEO FONTANA

- It is my pleasure to open this Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) High-Level Meeting which the European Union is honoured to sponsor this year through our project CRIMARIO (Critical Maritime Routes Indian Ocean).
- Maritime security is an essential priority for the European Union. European societies and economies have long been immersed in a system of global interdependence largely based on the seas. As the second largest exporter and the third largest importer in the world, the EU relies heavily on safe transport and reliable infrastructure but also on inclusive partnerships, effective coordination and worldwide connectivity.
- These are the main principles of the Global Gateway our new strategy to boost sustainable and trusted connections that work for people and the planet, to tackle the most pressing global challenges. And it is in the same spirit that the EU been actively working to secure maritime routes around the world. Ensuring a safe maritime environment is a global public good that requires international cooperation to stand against geo-strategic rivalries, piracy and organised crime. Besides conflicts, crime and piracy, there are other important maritime threats such as large-scale illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing which negatively impacts coastal populations, by way of loss of employment, loss of staple food and affecting their very survival. Illegal, unreported and un-regulated fishing is often connected with trans-national crime, human trafficking for forced labour, money laundering, terrorism funding, drug trafficking and weapon smuggling. The response to all these challenges and the promotion of maritime security, cannot be achieved by one country or organization alone. The efforts must be collective and multinational.

Email: dcoc@imo.org

Website: www.dcoc.org

- It is the acknowledgement of the need for full cooperation that has led the EU to be one of the main advocates of the Djibouti Code of Conduct and the Jeddah Amendment and to continue to support building national and regional capacity to address wider maritime security issues. Since 2009 we have been increasing our efforts to help our partners address the threats to maritime security and safety across the Western Indian Ocean. The region has undergone important developments over the last decade and is witnessing shifting regional dynamics. Historic peace agreements and political transitions across the region have offered hopes and opportunities. However, conflicts – often fuelled by ethnic tensions – competition for power and natural resources, violent extremism, competition for influence continue to be cause of instability and fragmentation in the region at a time when multilateral cooperation is becoming more important than ever.
- The Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean are strategically important region, with which Europe has longstanding political and economic ties. In May 2021, the EU affirmed its full commitment to deepen its strategic relationship and partnership with the region and its countries unveiling a new Horn of Africa Strategy. The strategy aims at strengthening our partnerships with the countries in the region, reducing instability, promoting democracy and sustainable growth, boosting trade and fostering regional integration. Supporting our partners in ensuring the security and safety of their maritime spaces is one critical aspect of this strategy.
- Beyond the Horn of Africa, we fully recognise that threats to maritime security put at risk the social and economic developments of other regions. In order to address some of these threats in the Gulf of Guinea and in the North-Western Indian Ocean the EU has launched what we call the Coordinated Maritime Presences concept that is coordination mechanisms that aim to increase the EU's capacity as maritime security provider. On a voluntary basis, EU Member States already active in these regions coordinate their navy visits to the region under a common umbrella, offering greater European engagement and promoting international cooperation and partnership at sea.
- Maritime security is also about effective surveillance capacity, sharing of information, and having the right capabilities and targeted training, as well as capacity for research and

development. Because of the growing maritime insecurity, many partners, coastal countries and the maritime industry representatives are asking the EU to assume a more prominent role. Not only in our immediate vicinity, but also further away. The EU considers that it is within its responsibility to support our partners and join forces to secure and protect our seas and oceans. We have the technical capacity and the resources to address many of these challenges, from tackling seaborne criminal activities to natural or man-made disaster response.

- I would like to mention here just some of our operations and activities that illustrate our firm commitment to maritime security. Operation IRINI in the Mediterranean aims to implement the arms embargo to Libya imposed by the UN Security Council, prevent the illicit export of oil and contribute to the disruption of human smuggling and trafficking networks; EUNAVFOR ATALANTA in the Western Indian Ocean that contributes to fight the Somali-based piracy off the Horn of Africa, as well as the trafficking of narcotic drugs and weapons, and monitor illicit activities at sea; The European-led Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASOH) mission which is being deployed in the region since 2020 to help maintain freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz and decrease tensions in this region of strategic interest. More recently the Maritime Security Programme for the Red Sea region launched to foster a common understanding of challenges and threats in that region, improve maritime and port security and safety of navigation in the Southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

- In the next days, you will hear about the important achievements of some of these EU actions and you will hear also about the information-sharing IORIS Platform, which has been developed by the CRIMARIO project together with and for our regional partners, and which is now being used by a number of Djibuti Code of Conduct signatory states and two regional centres. Together, all these different initiatives represent more than EUR 112 million of direct EU support to the fight against maritime threats across the region. They illustrate the unequivocal engagement and supportive role the EU has been playing in the implementation of the Code of Conduct and the Jeddah Amendment for more than decade. Such engagement will remain strong in the future as more and more collective efforts will be needed to succeed in making our seas and oceans more safe, secure and protected.



- I wish you a very fruitful meeting and hope the discussions you will have in the coming days will inspire even greater cooperation among DCoC signatory States, as well as with the EU.

- Thank you

END