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Subject: Council conclusions on Global Maritime Security  
- Council conclusions (19 June 2017)

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Delegations will find in Annex the Council conclusions on Global Maritime Security, adopted by the Council at its 3551st meeting held on 19 June 2017.

## **Council conclusions on Global Maritime Security**

### ***Introduction***

1. The Council highlights the role of the EU as a global maritime security provider in promoting maritime multilateralism and the rule of law at sea, including the importance of cooperation in the area of international law, in particular the universal application of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in line with the strategic priorities identified in the EU Global Strategy and relevant Council conclusions.
2. In this regard, the Council encourages the continuous implementation of the EU Maritime Security Strategy and its accompanying Action Plan which also aims at strengthening the cooperation between the external and internal security dimensions of EU policies, in coordination with other relevant sectoral and regional maritime security strategies and policies applicable to EU Sea basins and shared maritime spaces in the global maritime domain. The Council also highlights the close link between international oceans governance and global maritime security in line with the Joint Communication of 10 November 2016 on International Ocean Governance: an agenda for the future of our oceans and Council conclusions of 3 April 2017 in support of the implementation of the universal UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the impetus given to a global approach at the first ever UN Oceans Conference in New York from 5-9 June 2017, and takes note of the G7 Foreign Minister Joint Communiqué on Maritime Security.
3. The Council also welcomes the ongoing work on the implementation of the EU Global Strategy and the European Defence Action Plan, including notably those proposals and actions contributing to the development of stronger capabilities in maritime security.

## *Geographical Scope*

4. The Council highlights the importance of addressing maritime security priorities as well as further engagement of the EU in European sea basins, in particular the Mediterranean Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. The Council furthermore encourages regional cooperation in all European sea basins with third countries in line with agreed EU policies and in the framework of regional multilateral fora, such as the Black Sea Synergy, and encourages learning from existing best practices of regional maritime security cooperation in the Baltic Sea.
5. The Council highlights that cooperation with countries in the Arctic region, including in the framework of the Arctic Council, is a priority to the EU. Considering the rapidly changing environment and the opening of new trade routes, the possibility of having a more significant EU engagement in the Arctic region in support of regional structures and processes should be further explored in line with Council conclusions on the Arctic of 23 June 2016.

6. Recalling the Malta Declaration of 3 February 2017 and the EU-Turkey statement of 18 March 2016, the Council welcomes the ongoing work in the Mediterranean, in particular the work of Frontex co-ordinated operations in the central and eastern Mediterranean and of EUNAVFORMED Operation Sophia in international waters off the coast of Libya and the sharing of information with a view to improving overall maritime security. It furthermore highlights that close cooperation with countries in the Mediterranean region and regional organizations as well as trans-regional cooperation is instrumental to building local capacities across the Mediterranean region. The Council welcomes the on-going establishment of the Seahorse Mediterranean Network to increase cooperation and the capacity of the North African countries to tackle irregular migration and illicit trafficking by strengthening their border surveillance systems. The Council encourages the further development of a shared situational awareness picture in the Mediterranean Sea by relevant EU Agencies – inter alia, European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), the European Satellite Centre (SATCEN), European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) and the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) – while also fully developing and operationalising the Maritime Surveillance networking (MARSUR) in support of CSDP, and taking full advantage of the future Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) for the EU maritime domain, which should be further developed and operationalised. Work should also continue with United Nations specialised agencies, while making best use of the Shared Awareness and De-confliction in the Mediterranean (SHADE MED). Furthermore, the Council welcomes the role of the MED 7 in raising awareness of maritime security challenges in the Mediterranean Sea.

7. The Council welcomes the lessons learned from the EU Comprehensive Approach in the fight against piracy off Somalia and in the Horn of Africa which should continue to guide and inspire the EU to meet the challenges present in other insecure maritime areas, in partnership and dialogue with key international partners. It recognises the contribution of EUNAVFOR Operation ATALANTA and third party Naval Forces to effectively deterring, preventing and countering acts of piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia, as well as to regional security. The application of the best management practices by the maritime industry combined with the use of armed guards on board of merchant ships has proven to be important as well in countering acts of piracy. Equally, EUCAP Somalia and complementary capacity building programmes have significantly contributed to regional security and stability, in line with the EU Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa and the relevant EU Regional Action Plan 2015-2020. The Council underlines the importance of local and regional ownership and in this regard welcomes the ongoing work of the Contact Group on piracy off the Coast of Somalia. At the same time, it notes that the root causes of Somali piracy have not yet been eradicated and different forms of maritime crime in the Western Indian Ocean and Red Sea regions require continued attention.

8. The Council welcomes EU ongoing capacity-building activities in support of coastal states and regional organizations, such as ECCAS and ECOWAS, in the Gulf of Guinea, in line with the ‘Yaoundé Process’. It also welcomes the important contribution of the G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea Group and notes the continued success of the joint United Kingdom-France reporting mechanism – Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade – Gulf of Guinea. The Council underlines the need for effective cooperation and local ownership between regional states and stakeholders including in the maritime surveillance sector, also at operational level. The Council welcomes EU Member States' bilateral initiatives in the region and underlines the need to coordinate them with ongoing EU initiatives. It also notes with concern that the Gulf of Guinea region faces persistent piracy and armed robbery attacks with increased kidnapping for ransom events and welcomes the foreseen strengthening of EU capacity building activities in the region, with a specific emphasis on the legal sector and the rule of law at sea and on land. The Council also encourages regional states to adapt their legal systems in order to fight piracy, armed robbery and other forms of maritime crime in a more effective way.
  
9. The Council highlights that maritime security tensions are deepening across Indian and Pacific Oceans and encourages the EU and its Member States to promote confidence-building measures to address tensions in the South China Sea in accordance with UNCLOS and to share their positive experience in the peaceful settlement of disputes, including in the development of concrete cooperation for the common management of water resources and the protection of maritime environment. The Council welcomes progress made in ongoing negotiations between ASEAN Member States and China on the framework agreement for a Code of Conduct on the South China Sea. It considers this framework agreement as a promising step towards an effective Code of Conduct. The Council underlines the importance of cooperation in the area of international law and the dispute settlement mechanisms provided by UNCLOS.

## *Cooperation with other International Organisations*

10. The Council encourages cooperation with relevant international partners and organisations, in particular the UN. In this regard, cooperation between the EU and the UN system, including the UN Agencies, should be promoted. The Council welcomes the contribution of the UN in promoting the universal application of UNCLOS as well as the work done by the International Maritime Organisation and UN Office on Drugs and Crime to assure safe and secure seas and oceans. At the same time, it welcomes the report of the UN Secretary General from 25 July 2016 and General Assembly Resolution A/71/463 on waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea.
11. The Council welcomes the progress achieved in strengthening cooperation between the EU and NATO in the area of maritime security and encourages further progress in the implementation of maritime issues including ensuring the complementarity of our maritime capacity building efforts, in line with the Joint Declaration signed in Warsaw on 8 July 2016 by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The Council underlines that cooperation between the EU and NATO must continue to take place in full respect of the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity and decision-making autonomy of each organisation.
12. The Council notes that international cooperation with the Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN) and other Asian partners is an important step for the EU in this region. In this regard, the Council welcomes the upcoming EU co-chairmanship of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Intersessional Meeting on Maritime Security (2017-2020), the holding of several editions of the EU-ASEAN High-Level Dialogue on Maritime Security and looks forward to an increased engagement of the EU in the South East Asia policy and security architecture.

13. Building on the positive achievements of the African Union Heads of State and Government Summit on Maritime Security, Safety and Development, held in Lomé in October 2016, the Council underlines the importance for the EU of furthering its cooperation with African partner countries and organizations, including on blue economy, and to deepen dialogues on maritime security in different fora, including at the upcoming Africa-EU Summit in Abidjan. In this context, it supports the African Union in promoting maritime security and development, including the rapid entering into force of the Lomé Charter.

### *Way Forward*

14. Recognizing that Maritime Security is an essential precondition for development, job creation, research in the maritime and marine environment and global oceans governance, the Council welcomes the hosting by the EU of the fourth 'Our Ocean' Conference on 5-6 October 2017 in Malta and looks forward to commitments from all participants that make a contribution towards safe, secure, clean and sustainable use of managed oceans.
15. The EU reiterates its call for the full respect and application of international law, including UNCLOS. The Council stresses the importance of respecting the freedoms of the high seas, freedom of navigation and overflight in the exclusive economic zones, the right of innocent passage in territorial seas and the right of transit passage through straits, as well as strengthening the safety of navigation as reflected in UNCLOS. It also underlines the duties of third countries in exclusive economic zones, while it stresses the importance of safeguarding the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of coastal states under parts V and VI of UNCLOS. It also reiterates the need to ensure that the sovereignty and sovereign rights of the States to explore and exploit their natural resources are safeguarded.



16. The Council looks forwards to further steps in delivering a tailored EU response to improve maritime security in all key maritime regions across the globe and underlines the need to continuously pursue a comprehensive approach to contribute to a stable and secure global maritime domain by tackling maritime insecurity and promoting good governance at sea at a global scale, in line with the priorities and principles identified in the EU Global Strategy and other relevant EU policies.
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