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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Council conclusions on the Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020

1. At its meeting on 16 March 2015, the Council adopted the Council conclusions set out in the annex to this note.

Council conclusions on the Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020

1. The Council adopts today the annexed Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020 that outlines the European Union's support to the efforts of the region and its coastal states to address the many challenges of maritime security and organised crime. As with the Strategy, adopted on 17 March 2014, this Action Plan reasserts the importance which the European Union attaches to continuing the close cooperation with partners across Western and Central Africa, in taking all appropriate measures to combat maritime crime, including piracy and armed robbery at sea, illegal fishing, smuggling of migrants and trafficking of human beings, drugs, and arms, and to address the underlying causes to foster long-term security and stability in the region.
2. The Council underlines that the Action Plan aims at providing support both at the regional and national levels, to the ongoing efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), as well as to the Signatory States to the Code of Conduct concerning the repression of piracy, armed robbery against ships, and illicit maritime activity in West and Central Africa, adopted at the June 2013 Heads of State Summit in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The implementation of the Action Plan is intended to reinforce intra-regional cooperation as well as to increase the level of coordination among the EU and its Member States, and international partners. The Council stands ready to assist West and Central African coastal states to achieve long lasting prosperity through an integrated and cross-sectoral approach, linking the importance of good governance, rule of law, and the development of the maritime domain to enable greater trade cooperation, and job creation for the countries in the region.

3. The Council invites the HR and the Commission, in close consultation with Member States, to start implementing the Gulf of Guinea Action Plan, taking into account the EU Maritime Security Strategy and its Action Plan, and in close cooperation with the region itself, and key international partners. In this regard, it looks forward to the appointment of an EU Senior Coordinator for the Gulf of Guinea. The Council will revert to the matter as appropriate.
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EU Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020

1 – INTRODUCTION

1. The Foreign Affairs Council of 17 March 2014 agreed the European Union (EU) Strategy on the Gulf of Guinea designed to support the African-led cross-regional Yaoundé process initiatives between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC). The EU Strategy on the Gulf of Guinea is based on a joint communication "Elements for the EU's Strategic response to the Gulf of Guinea"¹ and is complementary to the general EU Maritime Security Strategy².
2. The Heads of State Summit held in Yaoundé in June 2013, with representatives from 25 West and Central African countries and regional organisations (the first time such a joint meeting between both regions had taken place), led to the adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding between ECCAS, ECOWAS and the GGC on maritime security in West and Central Africa, and of a Code of Conduct to address maritime insecurity in its widest sense, including the establishment of an Inter-Regional Coordination Centre to oversee implementation. This centre was launched on the 11 September 2014 in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

¹ JOIN (2013) 31

² 11205/14

3. This Action Plan is to put the EU Strategy into practice based upon its four strategic objectives: building a common understanding of the scale of the threat; helping regional governments to put in place robust multi-agency institutions; supporting the development of prosperous economies; strengthening the cooperation structures. Furthermore, it seeks to build on the regional momentum that was created at the Yaoundé Summit and provide appropriate support to regional organisations as well as to individual states³ to help them design effective strategies to tackle the challenges and implement them in a coordinated manner, in accordance with the Yaoundé Code of Conduct⁴.
4. The EU will also seek to ensure that its interventions in the fields of development cooperation, peace-building, conflict prevention and international security are mutually reinforcing. Regular dialogue will be maintained with ECOWAS, ECCAS and individual states as appropriate to ensure a common understanding of what is necessary and achievable. For example, support to the implementation of the ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy offers the opportunity to achieve mutually beneficial objectives. Inclusive and sustainable economic growth is crucial to long-term poverty reduction which is a primary objective of the Union's external action. Therefore the EU should encourage more inclusive growth, characterised by people's ability to participate in, and benefit from wealth and job creation.

³ Signatory States to the "Code of Conduct concerning the repression of piracy, armed robbery against ships, and illicit maritime activity in West and Central Africa", adopted at the June 2013 Heads of State Summit in Yaoundé are: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo

⁴ Link to Yaoundé Code of Conduct:
<http://pages.au.int/sites/default/files/Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>

5. Recent reports and assessments of the threat from transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, as defined by the Yaoundé Code of Conduct⁵, highlight a persistent, unstable, and potentially deteriorating security situation. The Gulf of Guinea has always been a hotspot for piracy and armed robbery at sea (ARAS). According to International Maritime Bureau figures, the Gulf of Guinea accounted for 18% in 2013 and 16% in 2014, of attacks worldwide. Over the last decade, approximately 80% of all violent attacks against ships have taken place in territorial waters, with harbour and port areas the most vulnerable. Yet over the last couple of years, there has been a shift towards such incidents occurring on the high seas and with a wider geographical spread further West and South⁶. On average, there are between 30-40 EU Member State flagged or owned vessels at any one time in Gulf of Guinea waters at risk of being targeted by pirates and criminals. There is widespread knowledge of under-reporting of attacks, so statistics vary, and are inaccurate, but the general trend is concerning enough to justify EU action, in particular the increasing pattern of violence against seafarers which is highly alarming⁷, and has already claimed the life of a Greek seafarer in 2015⁸.

⁵ For the purposes of the Code of Conduct, transnational organized crime in the maritime domain consists of any of the following acts: Piracy and armed robbery against ships (ARAS), money laundering, illegal arms and drug trafficking, illegal oil bunkering, crude oil theft, human trafficking, human smuggling, maritime pollution, Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and illegal dumping of toxic waste

⁶ The Kerala piracy incident off the coast of Angola in January 2014

⁷ International Maritime Bureau Monthly reports e.g. in June 2014 out of 5 reported incidents, 2 were hijackings with 65 crew taken hostage; and guns and knives used in 4 of the 5 reported incidents. In 2014, 8 cases of actual violence against crew, 9 cases of guns used, and 66 crew taken hostage compared to 0 in the Indian Ocean, 28 in the Malacca Straits, and 43 in the South China Sea (source: IMO Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS - <http://gis.is.imo.org>) Overall in 2014, 24 incidents were reported compared to 3 in the Indian Ocean - although the real figure is likely to be twice as much.

⁸ Attack on a fishing vessel off the coast of Ghana on 30 January 2015

6. The EU is concerned over the threat that illicit maritime crime, especially piracy and armed robbery at sea, pose to the safety of seafarers and other persons, including through kidnapping, hostage-taking and increased violence by pirates and persons involved in piracy. It is therefore important to create an appropriate regional legal framework for prevention and interdiction of such criminal activities, to ensure that persons engaging in piracy and armed robbery at sea are arrested, detained, prosecuted and convicted, in accordance with internationally recognized rules and principles of international law⁹. The Action Plan will also seek to support initiatives to provide appropriate assistance to EU seafarers who fall victim of piracy kidnapping and hostage taking, including through increased diplomatic contacts with responsible national authorities and building on existing initiatives under the auspices of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO)¹⁰, as well as the ongoing EU initiatives in support of security against maritime crime, such as those envisaged in the EU Maritime Security Strategy, the Athens Declaration of the Interim Review of the EU Policy for the Maritime Transport Domain, adopted in June 2014 by the Council, and relevant work of the European Coast Guard Functions Forum.

⁹ Especially the relevant provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 Dec 1982 (UNCLOS), in particular articles 100, 101 and 105, which set out the legal framework applicable to countering piracy and armed robbery at sea, as well as other ocean activities (ref. UNSC RES 2039 (2012))

¹⁰ Especially as regards the provisions of IMO Assembly Resolution A.1069 (28)

7. Maritime trade, including energy supply routes¹¹ to and from the Gulf of Guinea is largely conducted by companies based in the EU Member States, the primary export market for most countries in the region. Europe imports about 13% of its oil and 6% of gas from West Africa. The effect from transnational organized crime on maritime insurance rates could also have negative impacts on the economies of coastal countries. Furthermore, West African waters are estimated to have the highest levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) in the world, representing up to 37% of the region's catch, costing coastal states around \$1.3 billion per year, and severely compromising the food security and livelihoods of coastal communities¹².
8. There is also concern that the threat of terrorism in the region continues to grow, and criminal activities such as kidnapping for ransom likely to increase, for example in the run up to the presidential elections in Nigeria in early 2015. Trafficking and smuggling (drugs, humans, arms), with related money-laundering, also continues to grow across porous land and sea borders, taking advantage of continuing insecurity notably in the Sahel, and in other countries. Sophisticated and highly adaptable criminal networks are firmly entrenched across the region¹³.

¹¹ The cost to Nigeria alone of oil and hydrocarbon theft is estimated at some US\$ 6 billion per year.

¹² Around 9 million people depend on fisheries for their livelihoods in this region and fish represent 41% of animal protein intake Sources for IUU fishing activities; World Bank, Environmental Justice Foundation (2012) – Pirate Fishing Exposed: the Fight against Illegal Fishing in West Africa and the EU.

¹³ Source: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

2 – STATE OF PLAY IN THE REGION

9. The Inter-Regional Coordination Centre has been created to oversee implementation of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct by the three regional organisations, and it will have overall strategic and political level authority and competence to direct resources and means from one region to another as necessary to address maritime crime. It is gradually setting-up a core team composed of a mixture of both military and civilian staff. A military Director from ECOWAS and a civilian Deputy Director from ECCAS are already appointed. The two regional centres for West and Central Africa that sit underneath it (the CRESMAC; Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa, in Pointe Noire, officially inaugurated in October 2014, and its equivalent; the Regional Maritime Security Centre of West Africa – the CRESMAO, host state still to be decided) are still to become operational, pending the mobilisation of resources. Underneath the regional CRESMAC and CRESMAO levels, the maritime security architecture in the Gulf of Guinea will be made up of five Zones (A; D; E; F; G) covering the ECOWAS and ECCAS maritime space, each coordinated by a Multi-National Centre of Coordination (CMC). The CMC for Zone A will be in Luanda, Angola, but yet to become operational. The CMC for Zone D is situated in Douala, Cameroon, and is the first Zone to have become operational. The CMC for Zone E will be in Cotonou, Benin, expected launch date to become operational in March 2015. The CMCs for Zones F and G are still in the planning stage, with no decisions yet on what countries will host them. The operationalization of all these centres as soon as possible is a priority.

10. Multi-layered action at all levels – inter-regional, regional, zonal and national - will be necessary. A combination of top-down and bottom-up activity is envisaged as there is no 'one size fits all' solution given the wide-range of inter-related issues at sea and on land, and the diverse spread of countries and varying degrees of willingness and capability.
11. All national (Maritime Operations Centres) - zonal, multi-national (CMCs), regional centres (CRESMAC and CRESMAO), and the Inter Regional Coordination Centre, were never intended to be military only facilities but multi-agency or "multi-dimensional". This is one of the key priorities to support as this layered architecture of connecting centres gets constructed across both West and Central Africa regions.
12. Some good national level examples already exist like the establishment of the Vessel Traffic Management Information System (VTMIS) in Ghana, which enables access to information on cargo, namely dangerous or polluting ones, transiting or calling at ports. As well as the establishment of a Fisheries Enforcement Unit (FEU), a result of the push given by the EU IUU Regulation¹⁴ for Ghana to improve, inter alia, monitoring and compliance systems, which will also include equipment to monitor fishing vessels activities. More importantly, the unit is made up of a mixed team of Navy, Police and Fisheries officers.

¹⁴ (EC) No 1005/2008

13. The oil industry initiative the ‘Maritime Trade and Information Sharing Centre – Gulf of Guinea’ (MTISC-GoG) is based in Accra, Ghana, that has been operational since March 2014 and supported by some EU Member States, and other international partners. Merchant vessels submit voluntary reports to the centre which facilitates the creation of a maritime picture from Senegal to Angola. The MTISC-GoG provides security warnings to vessels about suspicious incidents and attacks. It also shares relevant information with the appropriate authorities of states in the region. The MTISC-GoG is showing the value of an accurate maritime picture and has gained the trust of the merchant shipping industry. It will work with the CRESMAC and CRESMAO and Inter Regional Coordination Centre as they grow in capability to remain fully complementary to the Yaoundé Code of Conduct.
14. The Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre - Narcotics (MAOC-N) is another good example of an operational platform bringing together experts and military from several EU countries, with the purpose of fighting against illicit drug trafficking by air and sea across the Atlantic Ocean towards Europe and the West African Seaboard. This organization works closely with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), and other international partners, such as United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Defence Agency (EDA), EUROJUST, FRONTEX and the US's Drug Enforcement Administration, as well as with key African countries particularly with Cabo Verde, but also with Guinea Bissau, now that the Constitutional order has been gradually restored in the country.

15. Since the adoption of the Strategy, the European External Action Service (EEAS) has briefed African Ambassadors in Brussels; the High Representative Vice President (HRVP) hosted a maritime security meeting in the margins of the EU-Africa Summit, which included key representatives from the region¹⁵, and which has been followed up by an AU-EU ministerial meeting on maritime safety and security on 8/9 February 2015 focussing on lessons learned and how to achieve better coordination and sharing of experience across the African continent on maritime security¹⁶. The EU discussed next steps with ECOWAS, ECCAS and GGC during preparatory work for the set-up of the Inter-Regional Coordination Centre in Yaoundé between April and June 2014 and attended the G7++ Friends of Gulf of Guinea (FOGG) meeting and the inauguration of the Inter-Regional Coordination Centre on the 10 and 11 September 2014, both in Yaoundé, Cameroon.
16. Positive signs are already visible with the multiplication of high level meetings at political and technical level to kick start the implementation of the Yaoundé process demonstrating that concerned governments take the threat of maritime insecurity seriously. In spring 2015, a Gulf of Guinea Maritime and Energy Security conference is planned in Angola. Togo is also planning to host an AU Maritime Security and Development Summit in November 2015. The last G7++ FOGG meeting took place in Accra, Ghana on 3 December 2014, and at the EU level, we will continue to participate at these as well as invite and host speakers in Brussels¹⁷, as we have done so far with the help of EU Institute for Security Studies (EU ISS)¹⁸, including regional, international, as well as academic and the private/industry sector.

¹⁵ From Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Togo, Benin and Angola

¹⁶ Awaiting AU link to the Conclusions to insert here

¹⁷ Rear Admiral Mendoua, Chief of Staff of the Cameroon Navy, who has overseen the creation of the Inter-Regional Coordination Centre presented the Yaoundé process intra-regional initiatives to the EU Military Committee on 26 November 2014.

¹⁸ EU ISS hosted a seminar in April 2013 (with link below), and a workshop in July 2014 with EU Member States. See link: <http://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/detail/article/fighting-piracy-in-the-gulf-of-guinea-offshore-and-onshore/>

3 – IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

17. Enshrined in the Comprehensive Approach principles¹⁹, it is intended to tackle the underlying causes not just the symptoms: link security, governance and development challenges offshore and onshore; draw from EU experience/lessons learnt from the Horn of Africa and Western Indian Ocean – where appropriate; and increase the level of coordination between the EU and EU Member States in the region as well as with international partners. All initiatives of the international community should be synchronised and complementary with each other.
18. The Action Plan offers opportunities to combine geographic and thematic priorities through a coherent and complementary use of the different EU external financing instruments and the extra-budgetary European Development Fund (EDF)²⁰ as well as contributions from the EU Member States to deliver on the EU's objectives. Synergies and complementarity with Member States ongoing activities in the region (FRONTEX operations, Sea Horse project, for instance) could also be explored. In addition, greater cooperation and collaboration with relevant international partners and organisations is to be sought, including in the framework of the G7++ Friends of Gulf of Guinea (FOGG), and in particular with the UN and US – to identify the level of regional state buy-in, and find areas for complementarity and for pooling and sharing.

¹⁹ The 8 Comprehensive Approach principles: 1. Shared Analysis, 2. Common Strategic Vision, 3. Focus on Prevention, 4. Mobilise different EU strengths and capacities, 5. Commit to the Long Term, 6. Linking internal and external policy to action, 7. Role of EU Delegations, 8. International Partnership

²⁰ Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI Regulation (EU) N°233/2014, 11 March 2014) including its Pan-African Programme; Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP Regulation (EU) N° 230/2014, 11 March 2014); the intra-ACP programme within the EDF and other Commission DG programmes.

19. The Action Plan also seeks to make the best use of all EU instruments, including the combined efforts of the Union and its Member States through CFSP/CSDP and the related initiative to support capacity building of partner countries and regional organisations in order to enable them to increasingly manage and prevent crises by themselves. The Action Plan takes into account the contribution of EU Member States' civilian and military capabilities and expertise to the EU Comprehensive Approach in the Gulf of Guinea, both on land and sea. Lessons learned, where appropriate, from past experience and from other scenarios, like the Horn of Africa and elsewhere, with ongoing CSDP missions like EUCAP Nestor and EUCAP Sahel Niger, should also be taken into consideration. Moreover, as set-out in the Comprehensive Approach, the Action Plan aims at enhancing civilian/military synergies and information sharing.
20. There are, however, some analytical gaps still to be filled, given the diverse mix of threats and challenges in the maritime domain that need prioritising, including some key areas such as environmental damage, seabed resources and other economic aspects. It is also important to concentrate on the key political, bureaucratic and economic impediments to tackle, in order to increase countries' incentives to take effective actions and sustainable solutions against maritime crime as set out in the Yaoundé Code of Conduct. Conflict and crisis analysis, early warning/risk assessment, contingency planning, crisis management, conflict prevention and stabilisation, and joint-programming must all be enhanced within the Action Plan as it moves forward, as crucial EU tools to advance our understanding and better target our response. In so doing, the Action Plan will become more precise in articulating what effect EU support can have against these risks.

21. Migration is also an important dimension within and from the Gulf of Guinea region, with regular casualties of illegal migrants trying to reach different countries by sea in very dangerous conditions. There is a window of opportunity to build on the current foundation of political will. Improved maritime security and the consequent reduction in criminal activity will reduce economic migration and increase trade, stability and prosperity in the region.
22. The EU has significant comparative advantage to many other partners as the most important development partner for the countries in the region as well as a major export trade partner. The current difficulties to appropriately address maritime crime at sea are symptomatic of wider governance and rule of law issues on land. The enhancement of maritime security will be a building block and enabler for greater stability on land. However, financial means are not enough. Enhanced diplomatic engagement and political coordination by the EU in the region is planned to be made in support and encouragement of regional and country-specific action to deliver against the Yaoundé Code of Conduct²¹ as well as dialogue and technical support – in the form of mentoring and advice, all comparatively low-cost but very high-value. The EU can offer a lot of practical expertise in this regard. The networked coordination by EU Delegations and Member States' Embassies at country and regional levels will help identify the gaps at country and regional levels and what EU support would be appropriate to provide. The EU Delegations and Member States' Embassies will play a key part of the cooperation process, under the overall leadership of an EU coordinator for the Gulf of Guinea.
23. Annex B breaks-down the four overarching objectives from the EU Gulf of Guinea Strategy into tables showing Expected Results and Actions over an immediate, medium and long term delivery horizon²².

²¹ For example at political Joint Way Forward/Strategic dialogues like those held with Nigeria, Angola, and South Africa in 2014.

²² Immediate; Medium (one to three years); Long term (three to five years)

4 – OVERALL OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

24. The present Action Plan provides the operational framework for the implementation of the EU Gulf of Guinea Strategy from present day to 2020 and beyond²³. It comprises ongoing programmes, as well as new projects and activities that will be implemented at the Union level through various instruments and mechanisms - including possible CFSP/CSDP – in coordination with EU Member States and in coherence with the EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS).
25. The overall goal of the present Action Plan is to contribute to the sustainable development of West and Central African coastal States' economies by promoting the significance of a well-governed, safe and secure maritime sector. It intends to reach this goal by enhancing the capabilities of coastal states of the Gulf of Guinea to tackle the complex and wide ranging challenges of maritime insecurity, organised crime and IUU fishing activities.
26. Over the next five years, the following results are expected:
1. Building a common understanding of the scale of the threat in the Gulf of Guinea and the need to address it among the countries in the region and the international community.
 2. Helping governments of the region build robust institutions, maritime administrations and multiagency capabilities to ensure maritime awareness, security and the rule of law.
 3. Supporting prosperous economies in this region in line with national and regional development strategies, to create employment and assist vulnerable communities to build resilience and resist criminal or violent activities.
 4. Strengthening cooperation structures between the countries of the region and the regional organisations to take the necessary actions to mitigate the threats at sea and on land.

²³ With a change of EU Commission team in 2020, this is a good marker to aim for before evaluating and revising/updating the EU strategy for the Gulf of Guinea

27. To achieve these results, the following types of actions are envisaged:

- Political dialogue and outreach at bilateral and multilateral levels with regional organisations and national agencies on how to address the various threats and challenges; seeking to prioritise areas of action and encourage national and regional "ownership"
- Capacity building and institutional support to the Yaoundé process architecture
- Provision of expertise and technical assistance (mentoring)
- Training and equipment
- Support to regional cooperation and information sharing; encouraging the states in the region, through the IMO and other relevant fora such as the G7++ FOGG group, to share good practice and lessons learnt amongst themselves and with private sector and industry stakeholders
- Joint operations and exercises
- Support to/facilitation of investment in priority infrastructures
- Support to sustainable and inclusive growth through development aid projects contributing to poverty reduction
- Support deployment of state-of art Information and Communication Technologies
- Coordination with international partners and organisations like US, IMO, and the G7 ++ FOGG group.
- Ongoing assessments and mapping of activities and initiatives, alongside reinforced monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- Close links and regular consultations with the private sector and industry on implementation of planned activities and on relevant proposals/recommendations/good practice, not least to avoid duplication.

28. An overview of expected results linked to the EU Strategy objectives is provided in annex A. More detailed proposals for action are compiled in annex B as the basis for an integrated implementation framework for interventions of the EU, in coordination with its Member States.

5 – IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

29. There are different EU financing instruments and mechanisms/modalities for the implementation of the Action Plan (e.g. political, technical co-operation, plus the broad possibilities of CSDP/CFSP action in coordination with EU Member States, or with third countries and other international partners). Some activities are already ongoing or under preparation in the framework of the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) – long term²⁴; others are being developed (e.g. enhanced coordination of actions supported through Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) with actions funded by IcSP and Development instruments), and still others that will require additional funding. EDF funding both under national and regional indicative programmes could also contribute to the implementation of the present Action Plan.
30. Division of labour and coordination with EU Member States in relation to financing and joint actions will reduce duplication and enable greater complementarity between different projects to achieve greater cumulative effect. Coordination with other key international partners like the US, the UN (IMO, UNODC), and the G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea, is also envisaged. This may include pooling and sharing, implementation of existing and possibly new EU initiatives such as Train and Equip.

²⁴ The Critical Maritime Routes (CMR) Gulf of Guinea (CRIMGO) project aims to counter piracy and supports a number of countries (Benin, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Nigeria, São Tomé, Togo; Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire associated) in developing the capacity for regional cooperation in maritime security (training, information sharing, coordination). The project was launched in 2013, has a four-year duration with a budget of 4.5 M€ and is now being further expanded to complement and reinforce regional and international initiatives in support of the wider Yaoundé process and the Intra-Regional Coordination Centre.

6 – STEERING AND COORDINATION

31. As set out in the Council Conclusions of 17 March 2014, a Senior EU Coordinator will coordinate the implementation of the EU Gulf of Guinea Strategy and this Action Plan and ensure systematic monitoring and reporting. Sectoral and cross-sectoral stakeholder consultations at the EU and national level are foreseen and close co-operation and coordination with the Political and Security Committee (PSC) on a regular basis, at least every six months.
32. The senior coordinator's role will be to deliver greater impact by joining up the EU and EU Member States active in the region to achieve a consistent, coherent and complementary use of instruments and reinforcement of political coordination, including reinforcing political dialogue with regional organisations and national agencies.

7 - EU AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT, TO DATE AND PLANNED

33. A number of activities in the areas of maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, funded by the EU and its Member States, are already ongoing or under preparation. They are briefly outlined below.

34. CRIMGO (Critical Maritime Routes for the Gulf of Guinea – EUR 4.5 million over four years) aims to enhance the level of information sharing, interagency cooperation and coordination at a regional level across the Gulf of Guinea. It has undergone a review to adapt and align itself more closely with the Yaoundé process regional initiatives. The project is now focussed on two components: maritime security regional cooperation and information sharing, and maritime education and training. The first one includes deployment of an expert – already based in Yaoundé - supporting the Inter-Regional Coordination Centre; the second one includes regional maritime trainings delivered to more than 60 stakeholders so far, and crisis response trainings already delivered to Benin, Togo, Cameroon and Nigeria. The CRIMGO project has also been extended to January 2017. Also under the long-term component of the IcSP, there is an additional EUR 7.5 million action planned to support maritime security in the wider Gulf of Guinea (Senegal to Angola) in support of the EU Gulf of Guinea Strategy and Action Plan which has already started its formulation phase, with project-work able to start as soon as 2016. This could include inter-centre communication, information sharing and capacity building, in particular in zones D and E, and gradually expanding to all zones
35. A shorter term IcSP 18-month (approx. EUR 1 million under Article 3) action (mentoring/guidance of an International Maritime Organization (IMO) expert embedded into the Inter-Regional Coordination Centre and South-South exchanges) is also planned, with the aim to deploying the expert to Yaoundé in March 2015. The IMO has been working in West and Central Africa since 2006 with the Maritime Organisation of West and Central Africa (MOWCA) in promoting the concept of an "integrated coast guard function network": encouraging a joined-up, multi-agency approach to maritime law enforcement including countering trafficking and border control, maritime safety, security and protection of the marine environment. An IMO expert alongside the CRIMGO expert will provide extra synergy and potential for the Inter-Regional Coordination Centre to have the best chance of success in establishing itself as a credible and viable institution.

36. Since 2009, under the Instrument for Stability²⁵, the EU has committed almost EUR 50 million to over 40 countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean through the flagship Cocaine Route Programme in efforts to fight against both organised crime and drugs trafficking. Components currently implemented in Western Africa include the Seaport Cooperation Project (SEACOP) to build inter-agency Intelligence and control Units to rummage suspected shipments and encourage regional and trans-regional cooperation against illicit trafficking via sea routes; the Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP) to set-up interdiction task forces in selected airports and connect them to international law enforcement databases; the West Africa Police Information System (WAPIS) to support in a few pilot countries the set-up of national and eventually regional databases to collect relevant police information; the AML-WA project to encourage Inter-Regional and International effort in anti-money laundering with financial intelligence units and law enforcement officers. Future relevant actions, currently under preparation, include a support to regional/trans-regional criminal investigation and criminal justice cooperation between countries along the Cocaine Route.
37. The EU's "Support to the Maritime Transport sector in Africa" programme has three projects (started in July 2014 – EUR 5 million – and will last until 2016) with a focus on West and Central Africa, on maritime safety, port efficiency and port state control, data upgrading and data exchange, funded by the European Development Fund (intra-ACP). The African Union (AU), ECOWAS, ECCAS, and MOWCA are associated to this Programme; all 28 MOWCA countries are eligible to benefit.

²⁵ IFS Regulation (EC) N° 1717/2006, 01 January 2007

38. The EU addresses IUU fishing activities through the EU IUU Fishing Regulation²⁶, and the Commission and the European Fisheries Control Agency support capacity building activities in the field of monitoring, control and surveillance (MSC) as well as fisheries development/governance efforts in particular, but not only, in the framework of SFPAs²⁷. Currently there are agreements and active Protocols with Cape Verde, Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Gabon, and Sao Tome and Principe. Negotiations with Liberia are scheduled to start in 2015. In parallel, the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (CSRP) has benefited from EDF funding to reinforce MSC. The programme ACP FISH II has also financed some actions in the field of MSC in West and Central Africa (including one with the Regional Commission of Fisheries of Gulf of Guinea - COREP). These experiences have highlighted the need to reinforce capacities at national level and to strengthen coordination through the mandate of regional fisheries bodies. In line with the EU's Comprehensive Approach, EU support provided through SFPAs will be coordinated with Development, IcSP, EDF and other relevant EU instruments as well as initiatives of EU Member States.
39. Some EU Member States are also actively involved bilaterally. Several are working with states in the region to modernize and expand the different harbours in the region. This is mostly done through strong collaboration with regional partners, industry and private sector. France maintains a permanent naval presence in the Gulf of Guinea with its mission "CORYMBE". It also implements, since 2011, the "ASECMAR" project, dedicated to the reinforcement of maritime security administrations in the region. Belgium, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the UK, are all also active in different fields. The idea of "Lead Member States" for specific areas or actions in Annex B could be explored further.

²⁶ Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008

²⁷ Commission investigations led to €M of fines and fees recovered by coastal or flag states in 2011 and 2012, and resulted in several decisions of refusal of importation into the EU.

40. The programming of the 11th EDF (2014 – 2020) is currently ongoing and will be concluded in early 2015. In both the West and Central Africa Regional Indicative Programmes (approx. EUR 1,5 billion combined), "Peace, Security and Regional Stability" has been identified as one of the focal sectors. The Gulf of Guinea features with regard to possible support under these programmes that comprise headings related to regional security and the fight against organised crime. Discussions are taking place with ECOWAS and ECCAS in a view to include action against money laundering, trafficking, maritime security capacity building, and the fight against IUU fishing activities and support to fisheries and aquaculture sectors, among the regional priorities.
41. Numerous National Indicative Programmes (NIPs) are already signed and cover sectors that are directly or indirectly related to the implementation of the present Action Plan. Particular consideration will be given to synergies and complementarity between EU and Member States funding, including through joint programming at country level, as well as on concentration of resources on the most urgent objectives.

42. Other international partners' engagements are also substantial. US Department of State Africa Bureau and United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) are working mainly in West Africa improving investigation of maritime organised crime by funding regional workshop trainings for different law enforcement agencies, and providing technical assistance to help the Nigerian ministry of Justice to prosecute maritime crime, including oil bunkering and kidnapping. AFRICOM conduct the OBANGAME Express annual maritime live exercises in the Gulf of Guinea, which includes not only participation from regional navies, but EU Member States as well as other partners like Norway and Brazil. Since 2013, in the framework of the African Partnership Station (APS), different exercises like 'African Winds' and 'Sahara Express' have involved marines from several EU Member States, US and countries from the region, working together in training and capacity building along the West African coast. Interpol, which has investigated attacks carried out since 2013, is mobilising its central national bureaux in the Gulf of Guinea and central regional bureaux in Abidjan and Yaoundé, and is devising the AGWE project to support police authorities in the Gulf of Guinea, to investigate maritime crime. All these initiatives are very useful in identifying capacity building and information sharing gaps, and activities under this Action Plan will need to take these into account.

ANNEX A - SUMMARY OF PROPOSED FIELDS OF ACTION

Overall Objective: Sustainable development of West and Central African coastal States' economies by promoting the significance of a well-governed, safe and secure maritime sector.

Objectives	Expected Results	Timeline ²⁸
1. An improved common understanding of the scale of the threat, and the need to address it among the countries in the region and the international community	1.1 Bilateral dialogues with ECOWAS, ECCAS, GGC, African Union, and National governments	I
	1.2 Regular reporting and analyses of risks with EU Member States and international partners	I/M
	1.3 Sharing of information on activities among all stakeholders involved	I/M
2. Reinforced multi-agency institutions at the regional and national levels	2.1 Capacity building of regional and national institutions	M
	2.2 Improved information exchange and deployment of state-of art Information and Communication Technologies	I/M
	2.3 Improved law enforcement and judicial cooperation (incl. customs, coast guard, maritime police and gendarmerie)	I/M
	2.4 Improvements in transnational (zonal) cooperation	M

²⁸ Immediate; Medium (one to three years); Long term (three to five years)

3. More prosperous and resilient economies and coastal communities	3.1 Improved governance of key industries (incl. fishing and extractive industries)	M
	3.2 Support for infrastructure projects, including ports	M/L
	3.3 Support to growth and employment in coastal areas	M/L
	3.4 Facilitation of research to understand conducive causes, and support to youth and educational initiatives to mitigate criminality	I/M
4. Strengthened cooperation structures with the region, and amongst EU Member States and international partners	4.1 Encouragement of practical regional cooperation beyond declarations of intent	I
	4.2 Political dialogues and coordinated lobbying for implementation of the Code of Conduct, MoU.	I
	4.3 Support to ECOWAS, ECCAS and GGC internal coordination with their MS; with each other, and with external partners	I/M

ANNEX B – PROPOSED FRAMEWORK OF ACTIVITY BY EXPECTED RESULTS

RESULT 1: An improved common understanding of the scale of the threat and the need to address it among the countries in the region and the international community			
No.	Expected Results	Actions²⁹ and Lead Actors³⁰	Delivery horizon³¹
1.1	Bilateral dialogues with ECOWAS, ECCAS, GGC, African Union, and National governments focussed around the EU's strategic objectives and on promoting the maintenance of peace and stability in general in the Gulf of Guinea region (as set out in UNSC resolutions 2018 and 2039)	(a) At the regional level: Identification of key actors in regional organisations and their levels of influence to enable productive bilateral dialogues (EEAS)	I
		(b) At the regional level: EU Political Dialogues with the Regional Organisations regularly assess security at sea and on land as well as gaps, trends and needs leading to identification of opportunities for political and operational engagement (EEAS)	I
		(c) At the national level: Identification of key actors amongst national authorities leading to high level contacts made with regular local meetings agreed. (MS/EEAS)	I
		(d) At the national level: Identification and assessment on whether we are dealing with an implementation gap or a regulation (governance) gap, or both. (e.g. regarding the building of robust multi-agency maritime administrations) (MS/COM/EEAS)	I
		(e) Supporting and promoting ideas to improve intra-regional cooperation dynamics; showcasing examples as good models to follow where possible, like MAOC – N, MTISC-GoG. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I
		(f) At the EU level: Participation and contribution at FOGG and/or extended CGPCS meetings, regional (ECOWAS/ECCAS) ministerial meetings and AU Summits to stimulate practical cooperation in support of Yaoundé process. (MS/EEAS)	I

²⁹ The Actions constitute a preliminary implementation framework for coordinated interventions of the EU institutions and EU MS

³⁰ Within their competences and legal mandates. This footnote applies to all references to "Lead Actors"

³¹ I: Immediate; M: Medium (one to three years); L: Long term (three to five years)

1.2	Regular reporting and analysis of risks with EU MS and international partners	(a) Improving understanding by taking a risk-based approach and producing a matrix; matching likelihood of the risk occurring with the impact or consequence of that risk on EU and Gulf of Guinea interests. (MS/EEAS)	I/M
		(b) Integrating analysis at local, regional, and international (UN, AU) levels as well as at thematic and geographic levels within the EU via participation/facilitation of Think Tank events, involvement with EU Member State experts, industry, CSOs, Horn of Africa partners, private sector, industry and shipping companies. (MS/EEAS)	I
		(c) At the EU level: Gulf of Guinea on agendas of political dialogues with key EU capitals and partners; US, China, Japan, Brazil, South Africa, Canada, Australia, etc. possibly leading to synchronised lobbying ahead of regional and international summits. (MS/EEAS)	I
		(d) At the national/regional level: Providing reporting & analysis on issues of interest (e.g. how to contribute to regional, national and local decision-making) (MS/EEAS)	I/M
		(e) At the private sector level: maintain close links and organized consultations with the private sector, notably shipping companies, industry, artisanal fisheries and mining sectors, taking their perspectives into account to ensure complementarity of action. (MS/COM/EEAS)	(I/M)

No.	Expected Results	Actions	Delivery horizon
1.3	Sharing of information on activities among all stakeholders involved	(a) At the national level: Identification of key donor partners leading to a clear picture established of the collective effort at the local level and where EU institution and EU Member States can have impact and provide added value. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(b) At the international level: Participation in coordination efforts of EU Member States and key partners' activities, in order to maximise combined impact and avoid duplication. (e.g. via the FOGG Oceans Beyond Piracy database and/or other tools) (MS/EEAS)	I
		(c) At the national and international level ³² : Mapping of ongoing activities by national governments, regional and international organisations and EU Member States, so as to identify niche areas of joint working amongst EU Member States and complementarity of effort with international partners. (MS/COM/EEAS)	M

³²

Possible information sharing by the maritime community must be in accordance with relevant provisions of the International Ship and Port Facility Code. Info sharing between military and non-military (private) actors requires: (a) a complete image for maritime surveillance that should be created jointly by the two stakeholders and (b) the creation of an info sharing protocol between them and with third actors, since relevant information is inadvertently classified.

RESULT 2: Reinforced multi-agency institutions at the regional and national levels			
No.	Expected Results	Actions and Lead Actors	Delivery horizon
2.1	Capacity building of regional and national institutions	(a) Conducting a needs assessment leading to a programme of capacity building engagement being mapped out to disable pirates' capacities on-shore and off-shore. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(b) Provide external expertise to Inter-Regional Coordination Centre according to needs and priorities. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I
		(c) Supporting Inter-Regional Coordination Centre in developing a communications strategy and provide regular updates on actions, results, planning and coordination with regional and zonal maritime centres. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(d) Helping establish 24/7 focal points at national and regional levels to be in place – as per the Code of Conduct – and leading to Country and Regional organograms created and shared amongst relevant centres. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(e) At the national level: Supporting countries in developing National maritime strategies outlining how they will develop and benefit from their exclusive economic zones– as per the Code of Conduct. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(f) At the national level: Supporting countries strengthen local (national) institutions/agencies and their own centres of operation and coordination to comply with the Yaoundé Code of Conduct (including possibly embedding expertise into these). (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M

		(g) At the regional level: Improving maritime intervention capabilities via maritime capacity building; coast-guard, navy, law enforcement and customs agencies properly trained and equipped. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M/L
		(h) Supporting multiagency capabilities leading to enhanced interoperability between the national and regional maritime responses. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(i) Promoting and encouraging use of good models already in operation for training of personnel to improve information exchange and law enforcement cooperation building on models like MAOC-N, MTISC-GoG, and with initiatives such as Interpol/WAPIS. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I
		(j) Supporting ECCAS and ECOWAS on the development of the CRESMAC, CRESMAO & Inter Regional Coordination Centre. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(k) Establishing engagement with the oil and fishing industries at the local and national levels in order to understand their needs and requirements as per the Code of Conduct. (MS/COM/EEAS)	M
2.2	Improved information exchange and deployment of state-of art Information and Communication Technologies	(a) At the national level: Supporting the streamlining of communication channels among maritime and other law enforcement entities leading to higher levels of maritime crime reported and recorded. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(b) At the national level: Providing support to ensure that communication equipment and sensors are adapted to each country but as much as possible interoperable within the region) and not overlapping existing structures leading to better use of information technology and enhanced maritime situational awareness. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M

No.	Expected Results	Actions and Lead Actors	Delivery horizon
2.2	Improved information exchange and deployment of state-of art Information and Communication Technologies	(c) At the national level: Improving surveillance and traceability systems, safe and reliable reporting mechanisms for effective exchange of information, data collection and management. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(d) At the regional level: Supporting effective implementation/dissemination of best practices (including Anti-Piracy Best Practice), Information sharing centres aligned and coordinated and complementary in passing on same messages to mariners and shipping companies. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(e) At the regional level: Standardization of recording and reporting models to speed-up and ease understanding of the data transmitted. (MS/COM/EEAS)	M
2.3	Improved law enforcement and judicial cooperation	(a) At the national level: Assisting development of national legal frameworks, as well as the adequate organisational structures needed to implement the Code of Conduct, leading to ratification of international instruments such as UNCLOS, SOLAS, ARAS, UNFSA, PSMA and harmonisation with national legislation to enable efficient and successful prosecutions. (MS/COM/EEAS)	M
		(b) At the national level: Supporting and strengthening compliance with applicable international legal instruments for fishing, offshore mineral exploitation (including oil and hydrocarbon theft), waste dumping, drug trafficking and tracking of financial flows, as per the Code of Conduct. (MS/COM/EEAS)	M
		(c) At the national level: Supporting an efficient justice chain – competent police and prosecution, independent and efficient judiciary, adequate detention facilities, in order to deal effectively with piracy and criminality. (MS/COM/EEAS)	M

		(d) At the regional level: Supporting conventional definitions towards a standard legal framework achieved and shared across the region as per the Code of Conduct. (COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(e) At the regional level: Supporting agreements for law enforcement and judicial cooperation between authorities of the countries involved. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
2.4	Improvements in transnational (zonal) cooperation	(a) At the regional level: Mapping of assets available in the Gulf of Guinea to manage a maritime crisis (CRESMAC, CRESMAO, MOWCA and Inter-Regional Coordination Centre). (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(b) Mapping of training needs at national and regional levels. (COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(c) At the regional level: Coordinating use of existing and future civilian and military technologies and capabilities for maritime domain awareness, capacity-building and training/exercising. (MS/COM/EEAS)	M
		(d) Strengthening inter-agency co-operation at both national and regional levels (CMCs transformed into multi-dimensional centres – with a coastguard function to work in line with the Yaoundé Code of Conduct). (MS/COM/EEAS)	M
		(e) At the regional level: Strengthening joined up working with direct neighbours and regional CMCs and other centres leading to successful operations and stronger security and maritime enforcement/coastguard functions/capabilities. (COM/EEAS)	M
		(f) Helping Maritime Zones D and E to become fully operational. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M

RESULT 3: More prosperous and resilient economies and coastal communities			
No.	Expected Results	Actions and Lead Actors	Delivery horizon
3.1	Improved governance of key industries (incl. fishing and extractive industries)	(a) Strengthening the regulation and management of fisheries and extractive industries (at both national and regional levels) leading to improved analysis/reporting on the enforcement capacities of different initiatives and improvements required or gaps where EU could assist. (COM/EEAS)	M
		(b) Encouraging countries to incentivise change with economic instruments (fiscal incentives for those companies that comply with regulations, reviewing tax incentives/ subsidies etc.). (COM/EEAS)	M
		(c) Reinforcing the mandate of Gulf of Guinea countries' Regional Fisheries Management Organisations leading to improved cooperation and effectiveness of the regional organisations and recording and reporting of catches. (COM/EEAS)	M
3.2	Support for infrastructure projects, including ports	(a) At the regional level: Supporting access to energy and basic services linked to the development of ports and maritime industries leading to an enhancement of intra-African trade as well as attracting EU investment in the African maritime transport sector. (MS/COM/EEAS)	M/L
		(b) At the national level: Supporting port compliance with IMO ISPS Code leading to more secure, effective & efficient port infrastructure and operations and improved revenues for Governments. (MS/COM/EEAS)	M
		(c) Facilitating investment in relevant infrastructure like ports (financial instruments, incentives, donor coordination etc.) (MS/COM/EEAS)	M

3.3	Support to growth and employment in coastal areas	(a) Taking due consideration of the needs of coastal communities in development strategies, incl. fishing communities. (MS/COM/EEAS)	M/L
		(b) Supporting job and growth creation in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors through improvement of the value chain. (MS/COM/EEAS)	M/L
		(c) Improving safety conditions in fisheries and extractive sectors including personnel training. (MS/COM/EEAS)	M
		(d) Promoting maritime training and study of maritime technology leading to more jobs. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(e) Support effective judicial systems in administrative, civil and commercial law, as key enablers of sustainable growth. (MS/COM/EEAS)	M
3.4	Facilitation of research to understand conducive causes, and support to youth and educational initiatives to mitigate criminality	(a) Understanding and addressing the socio-economic causes of criminality in this region. With particular attention to youth unemployment and radicalisation, illegal migration and smuggling. (COM/EEAS)	M
		(b) Identifying vulnerable/at risk communities through tools such as the Conflict Early Warning, Conflict Risk Assessments and EU Human Rights strategies. (COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(c) Addressing concerns of coastal communities with regard to illegal fishing and waste dumping. (COM/EEAS)	M
		(d) Encouraging access to education and alternative livelihoods via training incentives leading to a reduction of overall criminality. (MS/COM/EEAS)	M
		(e) Increasing community participation in local economic development and support initiatives. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M

RESULT 4: Strengthened cooperation structures with the region, and amongst EU Member States and international partners			
No.	Expected Results	Actions and Lead Actors	Delivery horizon
4.1	Encouragement of practical regional cooperation beyond declarations of intent	(a) Supporting regional coordination centres (CRESMAC and CRESMAO) to be in place leading to improved planning, coordination and communication amongst regional partners. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(b) Helping key regional and national agencies and institutions to have information flows, planning and decision-making processes in place. (MS/COM/EEAS)	I/M
		(c) Sharing and discussing EU lessons learned as appropriate from Horn of Africa (e.g. passing on experience from the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, in support of the coordination and cooperation efforts of ECOWAS, ECCAS and the GGC). (MS/COM/EEAS)	I
		(d) Sharing EU experience on the development of "coast guard functions". (MS/COM/EEAS)	I
		(e) Exploring South-South cooperation initiatives with Southern and Eastern African or Caribbean countries including seeking opportunities for partnering. (MS/EEAS)	I/M
4.2	Political dialogues and coordinated lobbying for implementation of the Code of Conduct, MoU.	(a) Encouraging the regional organisations to fulfil their Yaoundé Memorandum of Understanding obligations and reinforce their institutional links with the AU and its AIM 2050 Maritime Security strategy. (MS/EEAS)	I/M
		(b) Providing added-value regional focus, complementing the Sahel Strategy and conflict prevention initiatives. (MS/EEAS)	I

4.3	Support to ECOWAS, ECCAS & GGC internal coordination with their Member States; with each other, and with external partners	(a) Facilitating external partners' support through the G7++ Friends of Gulf of Guinea and other G7+ groups on Serious and Organised Crime leading to greater collaboration and de-conflicting activity. (MS/EEAS)	I
		(b) Identifying existing gaps and weaknesses in capacity (Abuja, Yaoundé, Libreville, Luanda) and opportunities for quick deliverable proposals to address political blockages. (MS/EEAS)	I
		(c) Identifying the level of regional state buy-in. (MS/EEAS)	I/M
