



Council of the European Union

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Council launches EU naval operation to disrupt human smugglers and traffickers in the Mediterranean

Today, the Council launched the **EU naval operation** against human smugglers and traffickers in the Mediterranean called "**EUNAVFOR Med**". Its mission is to identify, capture and dispose of vessels and enabling assets used or suspected of being used by migrant smugglers or traffickers.

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini said:

"EU has never taken the issue of migration as seriously as we are doing now. With this operation, we are targeting the business model of those who benefit from the misery of migrants. But it's only a part of a broader strategy including the cooperation with our partners in Africa, particularly in the Sahel region, and the work with the International Organization for Migration and the UNHCR. As EU, we are determined to contribute to save lives, dismantle the networks of the smugglers of human beings and address the root causes of migration."

EUNAVFOR Med will be conducted in sequential phases, in full compliance with international law, including humanitarian and refugee law and human rights. The **first phase** focuses on **surveillance and assessment of human smuggling and trafficking networks** in the Southern Central Mediterranean.

It is planned that the second stage of the operation provides for the search and, if necessary, seizure of suspicious vessels. A third phase would allow the disposal of vessels and related assets, preferably before use, and to apprehend traffickers and smugglers.

The Council will assess when to move beyond this first step, taking into account a UN mandate and the consent of the coastal states concerned, and subsequent phases will be conducted accordingly.

The Operation Headquarter of EUNAVFOR Med is in Rome. Rear Admiral Enrico Credendino has been appointed Operation Commander and will be assisted at sea by Force Commander Rear Admiral Andrea Gueglio. The common costs of the operation are estimated at €11.82 million for a two months start up phase and the initial mandate of 12 months.

EUNAVFOR Med, established on 18 May 2015, is one element of the broader **EU comprehensive approach to migration** which aims to respond to the immediate need to save lives and address emergency situations, tackle the root causes of irregular migration and fight traffickers.

[Finding solutions to migratory pressures](#)

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