



EU OPERATIONS in the MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Saving lives and preventing human tragedies have been and will always be one of the main priorities of the European Union's work in managing the refugee crisis. To this end, EU Naval Operations in the Mediterranean Sea work to save lives at sea, strengthen border control and disrupt the business model of traffickers and human smugglers. Since 2015, EU operations in the Mediterranean have contributed to saving more than 400.000 people; disabled 303 vessels used by criminal networks and transferred 89 suspected smugglers and traffickers to Italian authorities.

Border management and saving lives at sea

Central and Eastern Mediterranean: Frontex operations Triton and Poseidon

To reinforce its capacity to save lives at sea, the EU significantly enhanced its maritime presence in 2015, tripling the resources and assets available for Frontex Joint Operations Poseidon and Triton.

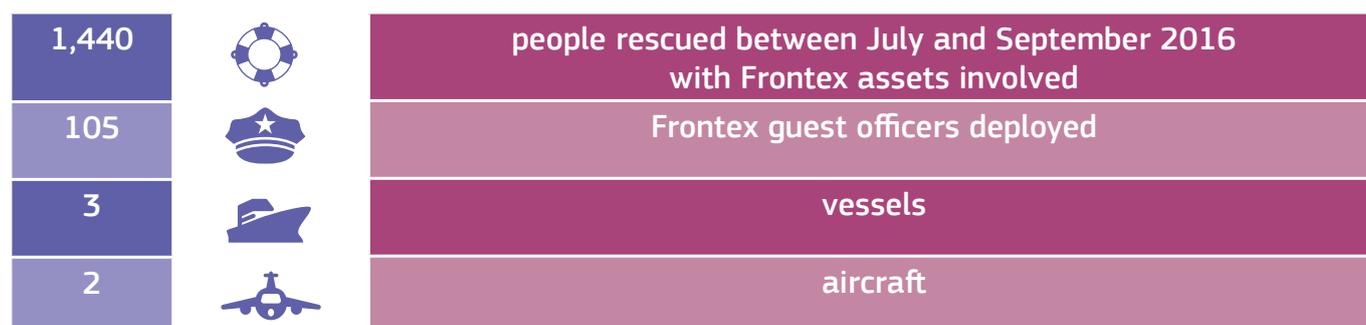
OPERATION POSEIDON provides Greece with technical assistance with the goal of strengthening its border surveillance, its ability to save lives at sea and its registration and identification capacities. Frontex also assists the Greek authorities in carrying out returns and readmissions. Its operational area covers the Greek sea borders with Turkey and the Greek islands.

OPERATION TRITON supports Italy with border control, surveillance and search and rescue in the Central Mediterranean. Its operational area covers the territorial waters of Italy as well as parts of the search and rescue zones of Italy and Malta, stretching 138 nautical miles south of Sicily. On numerous occasions, Frontex vessels and aircrafts have also been redirected by the Italian Coast Guard to assist migrants in distress in areas far away from the operational area of Triton.



Western Mediterranean: Frontex operations Hera, Indalo and Minerva

The border guard officers, vessels and aircrafts deployed by the agency in Spain assist the Spanish authorities with border surveillance and search and rescue. Experts deployed by Frontex also support with the detection of forged documents, stolen cars and import of illegal substances and excise goods.



EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD



The European Border and Coast Guard Agency was launched on 6 October 2016, building on the basis of Frontex. The new Agency will have a stronger role in supporting, monitoring and, when necessary, reinforcing national border guards, focusing primarily on early detection and prevention of weaknesses in the management of the EU external borders.

The Agency's permanent staff will be more than doubled and the Agency will be able to purchase its own equipment. A rapid reserve pool of at least 1,500 border guards and a technical equipment pool will be put at the disposal of the Agency. The European Border and Coast Guard will now ensure the implementation of Union standards of border management through periodic risk analysis and mandatory vulnerability assessments. In addition, the Agency will have a mandate to assist neighbouring non-EU countries in handling high migratory pressure.

Monitoring, reconnaissance and surveillance – Frontex cooperation with NATO in the Aegean

NATO effectively contributes to the EU's efforts to stem illegal trafficking and irregular migration through intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance in the Aegean Sea. NATO maritime forces are deployed in the Aegean Sea to contribute with critical, real-time information to fight smuggling and break the business model of criminal networks. The mission, which was launched in February, includes early warning and surveillance activities and the sharing of operational information with Frontex and with the Greek and Turkish Coast Guards. In March 2016, Frontex and NATO reached a common understanding on the modalities of their cooperation in the Aegean Sea. NATO is considering possible additional support to international efforts in the Mediterranean, in complementarity and cooperation with the European Union.



Disrupting trafficking and smuggling networks – EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia

To take urgent action against traffickers and human smugglers in the Central Mediterranean, **EU Naval Force Mediterranean Operation Sophia** was launched on 22 June 2015 following a decision by the European Council. Its objective is to contribute to the wider EU efforts to disrupt the business model of criminal networks in the Central Mediterranean and thus prevent further loss of life at sea.

The operation's core mandate is to identify, capture and dispose of vessels and enabling assets used or suspected of being used by migrant smugglers or traffickers. The operation is designed around 4 phases. The first phase, which has been concluded, saw the deployment of forces to build a comprehensive understanding of smuggling activity and methods. Currently the operation is in its second phase, which implies the search, boarding, seizure and diversion of smugglers' vessels on the high seas under conditions provided for by applicable international law. Future phases, subject to the necessary legal framework established by UN Security Council Resolutions, will include taking operational measures against vessels and related assets suspected of being used by human smugglers or traffickers inside coastal states territory.

All activities undertaken by the operation adhere to and are conducted under full respect of international law, including human rights, humanitarian and refugee law and the principle of *non-refoulement*.

Operation Sophia has been named after a baby born on 24 August 2015 on board the German frigate Schleswig-Holstein, operating in the Central Mediterranean as part of the EUNAVFOR MED Task Force.

89		smugglers & traffickers arrested by Italian authorities following EUNAVFOR Med activities
303		vessels removed from criminal organisations availability
26,428		migrants rescued
183		rescue operations
38,915		migrants rescued through EUNAVFOR Med aero-naval support

On 20 June 2016, the European Council added two supporting tasks to the mandate.

1 Training of Libyan Coastguards and Navy, in order to enhance their capability to disrupt smuggling and trafficking networks in Libya, as well as to perform search and rescue activities to save lives.

2 Contribution to the information sharing and support the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the High Seas off the coast of Libya, on the basis of UNSCR 2292 (2016). This will increase maritime situation awareness and limit arms flows to Da'esh and other terrorist groups.

25		troop contributing nations
1,771		total personnel
7		naval units
4		helicopters
3		air assets