

EU launches Operation IRINI to enforce Libya arms embargo

The European Union is stepping up its efforts to **enforce** the **UN arms embargo** on **Libya**, thereby contributing to the peace process in the country, through the launch of a **new CSDP** (Common Security and Defence Policy) military **operation** in the Mediterranean.

The Council today adopted a decision launching **Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI**.

Only political solutions and the full respect of the UN arms embargo will bring a solution to the Libyan crisis. But diplomacy cannot succeed unless it is backed by action. This operation will be essential and a clear contribution to promoting peace in our immediate neighbourhood through a permanent ceasefire.

Josep Borrell, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and President of the Council

IRINI, (Greek for "peace"), will have as its core task the **implementation of the UN arms embargo** through the use of **aerial, satellite** and **maritime** assets. In particular the mission will be able to carry out inspections of vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya suspected to be carrying arms or related material to and from Libya in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2292 (2016).

As secondary tasks, EUNAVFOR MED IRINI will also:

- monitor and gather **information on illicit exports** from Libya of **petroleum**, crude oil and refined petroleum products
- contribute to the capacity building and **training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy** in law enforcement tasks at sea
- contribute to the disruption of the business model of **human smuggling and trafficking networks** through information gathering and patrolling by planes

IRINI will be led by **Rear Admiral Fabio Agostini** as **EU Operation Commander**, and its **headquarters** will be located in **Rome**, Italy.

The mandate of Operation IRINI will initially last until **31 March 2021**, and will be under the close scrutiny of EU Member States, that will exercise political control and strategic direction through the Political and Security Committee (PSC), under the responsibility of the Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

In parallel with the launch of Operation IRINI, the existing EUNAVFOR MED operation in the Mediterranean, **SOPHIA**, will **permanently cease its activities**.

Background

Participants at the Berlin Conference on Libya on 19 January 2020 committed in particular to fully respect and implement the arms embargo established by the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1970 (2011), 2292 (2016) and 2473 (2019).

Against this background, the Council reached a political agreement to launch a new operation in the Mediterranean, aimed at implementing the UN arms embargo on Libya by using aerial, satellite and maritime assets on 17 February 2020.

EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA was launched on 22 June 2015 as part of the EU's comprehensive approach to migration, and will cease permanently on 31 March.

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