



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 4 December 2008

16878/08

LIMITE

**COSDP 1145
PESC 1648
INF 275
CONUN 129
COAFR 398
SOMALIA 15**

NOTE

from: Secretariat

to: Delegations

Subject : EU military operation to contribute to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast (operation ATALANTA)

– Information strategy

Delegations will find attached the information strategy for operation Atalanta, including the initial master messages, intended for the spokespersons of the Member States and EU institutions, as approved today by the Politico-Military Group.

EU military operation to contribute to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast (operation ATALANTA)

INFORMATION STRATEGY

Introduction

The EU has decided to conduct a military operation to contribute to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast.

The eradication of piracy in the region will only be achievable through the restoration of peace in Somalia. To this end, the EU acts within a comprehensive approach to achieve a lasting settlement of the Somali crisis, covering its political, security and humanitarian aspects.

On 5 August 2008, the Council of the EU approved a crisis management concept for action by the EU to help implement UN Security Council Resolution 1816 (2008).

In September 2008, the Council decided to establish an EU military coordination cell to support surveillance and protection operations undertaken by certain Member States and partner countries off the Somali coast (EU NAVCO) (see Council Joint Action 2008/749/CFSP of 19 September 2008 on the EU military coordination action in support of UN Security Council resolution 1816).

On 10 November 2008, the Council adopted Joint Action 2008/851/CFSP on a European Union military operation to contribute to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast (operation "ATALANTA" / EUNAVFOR), thus marking its decision to carry out an operation.

The objective of the operation is to contribute to the improvement of maritime security in the region (EU political objective) and to contribute to deter piracy and armed robbery and to strengthen the security of the main maritime routes (EU politico-military objective). The EU acts within a comprehensive approach to achieve a lasting settlement of the Somali crisis, covering its political, security and humanitarian aspects. The eradication of piracy in the region will only be possible through the restoration of peace in Somalia.

A coherent information strategy is necessary in order to ensure that the EU military operation is well understood and accepted in Somalia, the region, especially Somalia's border countries and internationally.

The information strategy aims at defining the main objectives, the main themes or messages to be developed and the audiences to which such themes or messages should be directed¹. To that end, the information strategy will support EUNAVFOR in its mission to contribute to:

- a) the protection of vessels of the World Food Programme (WFP) delivering food aid to displaced persons in Somalia, in accordance with the mandate laid down in UN Security Council Resolution 1814 (2008);
- b) the protection of vulnerable vessels cruising off the Somali coast, and the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast, in accordance with the mandate laid down in UN Security Council Resolution 1816 (2008) and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

To that end, the information strategy will have the following objectives:

- Communicate the aim, objectives and nature of the ESDP operation in order to ensure the understanding of the operation by all the audiences, EU cohesion, the continued willingness of EU Members and third States to participate and the support of the international community and international public opinion for the EU effort;

¹ See "Guidelines for ESDP Crisis Response Information Activities" (13817/02).

- Inform on the EU's comprehensive commitment in the region in order to achieve the continued support and assistance of all relevant regional actors, as well as their collaboration in the prevention and deterrence of piracy and armed robbery;
- Promote among appropriate local audiences support for EU activities and the rejection of any involvement in piracy or/and their willingness to allow pirates to operate in their areas;
- Contribute to deter and prevent pirate groups from committing piracy and armed robbery actions;
- Contribute to disseminate among the potential victims of piracy and the shipping community useful information to prevent and limit piracy and armed robbery;
- Increase information among the Somali population about the Djibouti agreement in order to gain the active participation and support of the local stakeholders for the stabilisation and economic development of the region.

The information strategy will consist notably of the dissemination, at different levels and to several target audiences, of messages concerning the operation in particular and the EU's action in the region in general.

At the implementation level, the different EU players (notably Presidency, Secretary General/High Representative, Member States, EU Operation and Force Commanders, European Commission and their respective spokespersons) will carry out their information activities in accordance with their practices and respective audiences, taking account of the political guidance of the Political and Security Committee (PSC) as embodied in the information strategy and the master messages.

A series of activities are outlined below on a tentative basis, and a first set of Initial Public Master Messages is attached.

In the military domain, the Information Strategy, as approved by the PSC, will be implemented through Military Public Relations / Public Information (Mil PR/PI) and Military Information Operations (Mil Info Ops) as appropriate². The Operation Commander will be in charge of the relevant aspects of the Information Strategy through the planning and conduct of Mil PR/PI and Mil Info Ops³.

Target Audiences

While a given message is not necessarily limited to one audience, the main target audiences are:

At international level

- The maritime community (ship owners, maritime operators, fishing boats, etc.);
- The African Union (AU), the United Nations and the international community, notably those active in counter-piracy in the region;
- Non-governmental organisations;
- The public in EU Member States, in third countries participating in the operation and in other concerned countries (United States for instance).

At local and regional level

- The public in Somalia;
- Persons committing or suspected of having committed acts of piracy or armed robbery in Somali territorial waters or on the high seas
- Potential victims of piracy within the region;
- Beneficiaries of piracy in the region, support networks for piracy and Somali drug traffickers and criminal groups;

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

- Spoilers that would exploit EUNAVFOR's actions in order to undermine the EU's and the international community's wider actions to promote stability in Somalia;
- Somalia authorities and other political players in the country;
- The public and governments in other African countries, particularly neighbouring countries (in particular Kenya, Djibouti, Tanzania, Yemen and Eritrea);

Themes

The information strategy should be based on a series of messages articulated around main themes, including:

- Objectives of the EU military operation: contribute to the protection of vessels of the World Food Programme in order for humanitarian aid to be delivered; the protection of vulnerable vessels cruising off the Somali coast; contribute to the improvement of the maritime security in the region and to deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast;
- Legitimacy of the EU action : contribute to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions; co-operation with the United Nations and the EU's intent to contribute in a concrete manner to the implementation of these resolutions;
- The full agreement of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia;
- The EU operation does not interfere directly in Somalia's internal political problems.
- ATALANTA is a maritime military operation designed to keep watch over maritime areas off the coast of Somalia, including its territorial waters, and in the broader area. The area of operation includes the Somali territorial waters while excluding the land of Somalia;
- Manage expectations: the recrudescence of piracy is mainly the result of the Somalia crisis. EUNAVFOR constitutes a temporary answer aiming at contributing to improve the maritime security in the region. A long term solution to the problem of piracy requires stabilising Somalia;

- The importance of Somalia for the EU: the ATALANTA operation is launched within the framework of the EU's comprehensive commitment for peace, security and development in Somalia and in the region, which involves a broad set of measures encompassing the political, economic, security - including EU support to AMISOM capacities -, humanitarian and human rights dimensions;
- Credibility of EUNAVFOR: the EU-led force is robust and committed to fight piracy and armed robbery;
- The rules which will apply to the transfer of captives with a view to the exercise of jurisdiction (legal aspects);
- Key information on international and EU maritime activities in the region
- Piracy harms the local population by damaging local and international efforts for the resolution of the Somalia political and humanitarian crisis.
- Close coordination with other international actors (notably, the United Nations, NATO, CTF 150, Russia, India, Malaysia and other countries active in the area of operation).

Specific features of the military operation

The planned military operation has a certain number of specific features which must be taken into account in the planning of the activities of press and information. These specific features include the following:

- This is the first EU naval operation;
- It takes place in a sequence which started with the establishment of the EU NAVCO coordination cell. Thus, there is already a certain degree of visibility of the EU's involvement in this field;
- Strong media interest in the problem of piracy in the region of Somalia due to the disruption of humanitarian aid delivery to Somalia and the effect on maritime activities in the region.

- For these reasons, need to manage the expectations concerning the operation by explaining well not only what the EU can do in this field but also what are the limitations of any action in this field, including in respect of the very large area of operations;
- Force HQ afloat;
- Need to provide the means in order to be able to manage the expected very strong demand of visits of the media (including audio-visual), on ships taking part in the operation;
- Importance of the legal aspects (applicable laws, competent authorities, etc);

Press and information products/activities

- EU Council conclusions (GAERC) of 15 September 2008;
- Information activities concerning the establishment of EU NAVCO unit;
- SG/HR Javier Solana statement on 14 October 2008 (OpCdr and OHQ);
- Press briefing in Brussels on the occasion of the preparatory work for the Joint Action;
- Press conference/Conclusions on the occasion of GAERC on 10 November 2008 (in the presence of Ministers of Defence) + press release on the same day on the adoption of the Joint Action;
- SG/HR statement on the occasion of the official launch of the operation (planned for the beginning of December 2008);
- Background press briefings ahead of the launch of the operation;
- Preparation of material such as: (a) web page of the operation on Council web site (already online and to be developed) and relevant information on the Commission website site; (b) fact sheets on the envisaged operation and on the EU's overall engagement in the region;
- Press briefings by OpCdr/FCdr (Brussels, Northwood and in theatre);
- Press visits to the region and possibly to OHQ
- Audiovisual material (Video News Releases, stockshots), including for launch of operation
- Articles in the "ESDP Newsletter"
- Articles in international newspapers, including SG/HR op-eds;
- High level visits (OHQ and theatre of operation)

Coordination

A coherent information strategy is necessary in order to ensure that the message conveyed by the various players (EUNAVFOR, the Council Presidency, EU Member States, European Commission, other participating countries, United Nations) is consistent.

Once the operation is launched, close coordination between Brussels and the OHQ is essential to ensure that the information strategy is implemented. Communication activities on EUNAVFOR will be closely coordinated with the spokesperson of the SG/HR and the Council Press Office. The spokesperson of the SG/HR and the Council Press Office will be informed immediately and directly of any event which may have a media impact and will then give appropriate guidance to those responsible for communicating information about the operation.

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EU military operation to contribute to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast (Operation ATALANTA - EUNAVFOR)

Initial Public Master Messages

A. CORE MASTER MESSAGES

- In accordance with Resolutions 1814 (2008), 1816 (2008) and 1838 (2008) of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the EU has decided to conduct a maritime military operation to contribute to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast¹ and in the broader area.
- UNSC Resolution 1838 (2008) of 7 October 2008 commends the ongoing planning process towards a possible EU naval operation and urges States that have the capacity to do so to cooperate with the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea. The UN Security Council also urges States and regional organizations to continue to take action to protect the World Food Programme (WFP) maritime convoys.
- The EU is very concerned by the recent proliferation of acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea against vessels off the coast of Somalia, and by the serious threat it poses:
 - to the prompt, safe and effective delivery of humanitarian aid to Somalia,
 - to international navigation and the safety of commercial maritime routes, and
 - to fishing activities conducted in conformity with international law

¹ This military operation follows the establishment in September 2008 of a EU military coordination cell to support surveillance and protection operations undertaken by certain Member States and partner countries off the Somali coast. Called EU NAVCO this coordination cell was established within the framework of UN Security Council resolution 1816 (2008).

- The EU reaffirms its respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of Somalia. The eradication of piracy in the region will only be achievable through the restoration of peace in Somalia. To this end, the EU acts within a comprehensive approach to achieve a lasting settlement of the Somali crisis, covering its political, security and humanitarian aspects.

B. DETAILED MASTER MESSAGES

1. Called Operation ATALANTA / EUNAVFOR, the EU military operation will pursue the following objectives:
 - contribute to the protection of WFP vessels delivering food aid to displaced persons in Somalia;
 - contribute to the protection of vulnerable vessels cruising off the Somali coast, and the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast.
2. More specifically, EUNAVFOR will undertake actions to deter, prevent and repress acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea, *inter alia*: (a) provide protection to vessels chartered by the WFP, in particular when cruising in Somali territorial waters, by means, *inter alia*, of escort and/or the presence on board those vessels of armed units; (b) provide protection to other vessels cruising in the areas under its surveillance, on a case by case basis; (c) keep watch over the waters of the coast of Somalia and the broader area in which there are dangers to shipping; [(d) have the authority to capture and transfer persons committing or suspected of having committed acts of piracy or armed robbery.]
3. EUNAVFOR is an EU autonomous operation conducted within the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). It is the first maritime operation launched by the EU within the framework of ESDP.

4. Rear Admiral Philip Jones (UK) has been appointed EU Operation Commander for EUNAVFOR. The EU Operational Headquarters will be located at Northwood (UK). Commodore Antonios Papaioannou (Greece) has been appointed Force Commander for the first period of the operation. The Force Headquarters will be afloat.
5. At any one time, EUNAVFOR will include up to 6 frigates and 3 maritime patrol aircrafts, with approximately 1200 people taking part in the operation at any one time.
6. Operation ATALANTA will cover a period of 12 months.
7. Under the responsibility of the Council of the EU, the Political and Security Committee (PSC) will exercise the political control and strategic direction of EUNAVFOR
8. Persons committing or suspected of having committed acts of piracy or armed robbery captured in Somali territorial waters or on the high seas and property used to carry out such acts may be transferred:
 - to the competent authorities of the flag Member State or third State of the vessel which took them captive
 - or, when this Member State or third State cannot or does not wish to exercise jurisdiction, to a Member State or third State wishing to exercise jurisdiction over those persons and property.
9. No captive may be transferred to a third State unless the conditions for the transfer have been agreed with that third State in a manner consistent with relevant international law, notably international law on human rights.
10. The financial reference amount for the common costs of the EU military operation will be EUR 8.3 million.

The EU and Somalia

11. The EU has regularly expressed its concern at the situation in Somalia and off its coasts, and its commitment to a comprehensive approach to a lasting settlement of the Somali crisis, covering its political, security and humanitarian aspects. It has welcomed the signing by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) in Djibouti on 19 August 2008 of the peace agreement initialled by the two sides on 9 June 2008.
12. The EU supports the ongoing political process, under the auspices of the Special Representative for Somalia of the UN Secretary General, between the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia. The EU has called on all parties in Somalia to join this political process in order to restore peace, security, stability and development in Somalia.
13. The EU supports measures to improve security on the ground in Somalia. To this end, the EU and its Member States support the African Union military mission to Somalia (AMISOM) financially and through capacity building. Furthermore, the EU supports the Somali police force, including through capacity building, with the aim to increase its effectiveness and to combat abuses and grave human rights violations.
14. The Joint Strategy Paper for Somalia for the years 2008-2013 represents an important tool for the European Union to contribute to the social and economic development of Somalia. It provides an EC 10th European Development Fund (EDF) allocation of EUR 215.8 million, to cover mainly three focal sectors of cooperation: governance, education and the productive sectors, particularly rural development. Restoring the rule of law through support of Somali-owned governance and security sector initiatives is another EU objective. At the political level, the critical goal is to deliver a new constitution, adopted by referendum, and to have democratically elected institutions by the end of the transitional period. To this end, the European Union supports the efforts of the UNSRSG in the Djibouti peace process which, if successful, would lead to the re-establishment of the rule of law in Somalia and open a way to eradicate piracy.

15. Through the Instrument for Stability the European Commission plans to address the issues of security in Critical Maritime Routes in its 2009-11 indicative programme. Among other regions, it focuses on the Horn of Africa. This programme is expected to be ready by the end of 2008 for implementing concrete projects from late 2009. The measures identified so far could include support for the establishment of a documentation and training centre for the Horn of Africa, as well as a regional cooperation and coordination platform. An assessment mission carried out by the experts from EU Member States was deployed in the region (Saudi Arabia, Djibouti and Yemen) at the beginning of December 2008. As a result of these efforts it is expected that in the long term better compliance with the international legal framework and a reduction of incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea could be reached among other aims (e.g. law enforcement and risk preparedness).
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