

Winning the Endgame against Piracy
The European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy Missions in the Horn of Africa

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Introduction

The Treaty of Lisbon sets out the principles, aims and objectives of the external action of the European Union.¹ In the pursuit of these objectives, the Treaty calls for consistency between the different areas of EU external action and between these and its other policies. Following the Treaty's entry into force and the new institutional context it created, including the creation of the post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security who is also Vice-President of the European Commission, as well as the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU has both the increased potential and ambition – by drawing on the full range of its instruments and resources – to make its external action more consistent, more effective and more strategic. Confronted with piracy off the coast of Somalia and the need to tackle this problem against the backdrop of systemic insecurity and instability in the Horn of Africa, the EU 'joined-up' its diplomatic, defence and development activities and integrated them in a comprehensive approach. As integral part of this comprehensive approach the EU launched three Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Missions in a single area of operations.

EUNAVFOR (the European Union Naval Force) Operation Atalanta is the European Union's counter-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia. It was launched in December 2008 and its mandate is to provide: a) protection to World Food Programme vessels delivering aid to displaced persons in Somalia, and to African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) shipping, b) deter, prevent, and repress acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the Somali coast, and c) safeguard vulnerable shipping off the Somali coast on a case-by-case basis. In addition, EUNAVFOR also contributes to the monitoring of fishing activities off the coast of Somalia. The achievements of EUNAVFOR are impressive. Since the launch of the operation in 2008, EUNAVFOR has had a 100% success rate providing protection to WFP vessels

delivering food to the Somali people and to AMISOM shipments critical to the success of the AU operation in Somalia. In addition, it has ensured the protection of other vulnerable shipping within the IRTC and the High Risk Area, contributed to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia and transferred suspected pirates to competent authorities with a view to their prosecution and conviction as a result of its close cooperation with regional governments such as those of the Republic of the Seychelles and Kenya.

EU Training Mission Somalia is a military training mission which aims to strengthen the Somali National Government and the institutions of Somalia by providing military training to members of the Somali National Armed Force. Launched in 2010, the mission has contributed to the training of approximately 3,600 Somali soldiers with a focus on non-commissioned officers, junior officers, specialists and trainers. Training was initially provided in Uganda due to the political and security situation in Somalia, in close collaboration with the Uganda People's Defence Forces. The training of the Somali National Armed Forces is focused on unit commanders up to company and battalion level, specialist training in the areas of military police, civilian-military cooperation, intelligence and combat engineering. Specific modules on international humanitarian law and human rights, and the protection of civilians are also included. Today, EUTM Somalia has established a compound in Mogadishu and continues the training of Somali armed forces in Somalia.

EUCAP Nestor is a civilian CSDP mission which assists countries in the Horn of Africa/Western Indian Ocean region to develop a self-sustaining capacity for maritime security, including counter-piracy, maritime governance and to strengthen their maritime criminal justice system. Its Headquarters is in Djibouti. The mission was launched in 2012 and its teams conduct training activities in Somalia, Djibouti, and the Seychelles. EUCAP Nestor is the first regional maritime capacity--building mission of the EU. This requires it to work with the main actors responsible for maritime security in each host country. Typically this includes coast guard, navy, civilian coastal police, prosecutors, judges and other actors. Mission experts provide advice, mentoring, and training. In Somalia, EUCAP Nestor aims to support the development of Somalia's judiciary and coastal law enforcement capability supported by a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework. The mission also supports the

creation of regional networks to share information and create a better understanding of the maritime security needs in the region.

The EU Operations Centre ensures coordination between the three CSDP missions. Executing two military missions and one civilian CSDP mission in a single area of operations as part of the EU's Comprehensive Approach involving development programmes and diplomatic action makes excellent coordination at both the operational and strategic level imperative. To ensure and strengthen operational coordination and civil-military synergies between the three CSDP missions, the EU activated its Operations Centre for the first time. The Operations Centre is tasked with providing support for operational planning and conduct, liaising and facilitating interaction with the European Commission and with the European Union Special Representative for the Horn of Africa. The Operations Centre does not have command responsibility. It has 16 dedicated staff on secondment from EU Member States.

The EU's Comprehensive Approach is outlined in the '[Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa](#)'² which sets out the way in which the EU will work in partnership with the region, in particular the African Union, and key international partners. It defines five priorities for EU action: building robust and accountable political structures, contributing to conflict resolution and prevention, mitigating security threats emanating from the region, promoting economic growth, and supporting regional economic cooperation. Coordination has been mentioned as a key challenge when it comes to delivering the comprehensive approach. The synchronization of operational planning and the programming of development programmes is yet another major challenge as the three CSDP-missions are complemented by development programmes funded under the 'Instrument for Stability' (the EU Critical Maritime Routes programme) and the 'European Development Fund' (the Regional Maritime Security Programme – MASE).

In addition, the EU has large programmes in place for the broader social and economic development cooperation with Somalia which concentrate on governance, education and the productive sectors, particularly rural development. To intensify the political dialogue, the EU appointed a Special Representative to the Horn of Africa, Mr. Alexander Rondos, to actively contribute to regional and international efforts to achieve lasting peace, security and development in the region. Despite the operational difficulties attached to this way of

working, EU stakeholders are convinced that by joining up their efforts in a comprehensive approach, they stand a real chance of addressing complex issues at the nexus of development and security.

Transition to the Region

The broader political context for the EU's engagement in the fight against Somali-based piracy has to a large extent been provided by and coordinated through the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS). The CGPCS was established in 2009 to bring together all stakeholders, public and private, civil and military to discuss and coordinate activities to end Somali piracy. Through a combination of complementary actions and activities – naval operations, capacity building ashore and best management practices, the employment of private security guards on board ships and the establishment of a functioning judicial process to end the impunity of piracy in the Indian Ocean – the international community has been able to bring down the number of pirate attacks to almost zero. It is at the time of writing too early to declare the piracy business model 'broken beyond repair'. The challenge is to sustain the current status quo and to make sure that the waters off the coast of Somalia remain safe for seafarers and that freedom of navigation is assured.

Reaching this level of success has required the continuous effort of international partners and organizations over several years but sustaining the achievements and winning the endgame against piracy requires the commitment, leadership and empowerment of the region. Only the region can, ultimately, sustain the progress and achievements that have been made in the fight against piracy. This obviously requires much international support for years to come but the balance needs to tilt towards regional leadership, supported and enabled by the international community. The 2014 UAE Counter Piracy Week has brought the stakeholders of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia to the UAE for a series of high-level meetings and discussions. It is an important and timely event for discussing matters of common concern and how to make the transition to the region happen. The bottom line remains: winning the endgame against Somali piracy can only be done ashore, and this requires the empowerment of the region to lead and to sustain the achievements made so far.

Endnotes

¹ http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/full_text/index_en.htm

² http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126052.pdf

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