STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE:
TOWARDS AN INITIATIVE FOR THE SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLUE ECONOMY IN THE
WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN
Barcelona, 2nd of February 2017

Briefing Note – Panel 1B

A safer and more secure maritime space:
Increasing capacity in delivering coastguard functions

PANEL 1B - A SAFER AND MORE SECURE MARITIME SPACE: INCREASING CAPACITY IN DELIVERING COASTGUARD FUNCTIONS

Introduction and framing the activity of the panel

Objectives of the panel

The western Mediterranean region is facing a number of complex maritime threats leading to growing concerns on the safety and security of human and economic assets. Ensuring both safety and security of activities at sea is therefore an essential prerequisite for the sustainable development of a range of relevant Blue Economy activities, as well as for the wellbeing and stability of the region. The panel focuses on the way to reach the needed common level of operational standards and skills between coastguard functions bodies for information exchange, planning and conducting effective joint operations across the western Mediterranean region.

Introducing the speakers

Co-chairs

- Mr Michele Avino, Unit for Border Management and Schengen, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission
- Ms Barbara Sellier, Deputy Head of Unit for Maritime Safety, Directorate General for Mobility and Transport, European Commission, European Commission

Panelists

- Cpt Carlos González, Guardia Civil, Spain
- Adm Piero Pellizzari, Coast Guard ,Italy
- Cap Paolo Zottola, Headquarter Operational Center, Guardia di Finanza, Italy
- Adm Patrick Augier, Deputy Secretary General for the Sea, France
- Representative from Tunisian Coast Guard
- Adm Carlos Ventura Soares, ECGFF Chair representative Multi purpose operations, Portugal
- Representative from Moroccan Coast Guard
- Col Masoud Abadalsamd, Coast Guard Libya
- Ms Manuela Tomassini, Head of Department B Safety and Standards European Maritime Safety Agency

Setting the topic of the panel

What is the challenge at stake?

The western Mediterranean region is facing a number of complex maritime threats, leading to growing concerns on the safety and security of human and economic assets. All such concerns are preventing future Blue Economy development potentials across the region and require greater coordination across involved actors to increase maritime safety and security at sea in the region. A number of initiatives involving Southern partner countries promote the development of maritime surveillance, maritime security and safety, but this promotion and means allocation are done at different levels or with different partners in the region and cooperation amongst coastguard functions across the western Mediterranean region is still limited.

What are the persisting problems and gaps identified?

The set-up, maintenance and operation of information-sharing systems are a pre-requisite for enhanced maritime surveillance to sustain safety and security policy. Although progress has been made to facilitate information sharing in specific crises (e.g. oil pollution events), the geographical coverage of existing data systems is still limited on the Southern shore of the Mediterranean. For the time being there is still a lack of information-sharing regarding the maritime pictures (i.e. covering the different issues at stake) across the western Mediterranean region as a whole.

Different initiatives[1] are dealing with cross-border cooperation with respect to the issue of maritime security and safety, with different EU agencies being involved (European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX), EMSA, EFCA). These initiatives can be used as seeds to enhance joint initiatives in the field of maritime safety and security in the western Mediterranean region, building on the existing cooperation actions (capacity building with SAFEMED projects or Seahorse Mediterranean Network for instance)..

An enhanced and homogeneous maritime safety culture in the Mediterranean is needed. It can be incentivised through the cooperation between EU and Non-EU coastal States in key areas such as flag state implementation; port state control; protection of the marine environment; maritime traffic surveillance; search and rescue.

Joint activities, exchange of best practices between EU and Non-EU Countries and facilitation of existing tools and applications are an additional step towards greater coordination within the Region. Cooperation amongst training centres, aimed at enhancing mutual understanding and promoting joint training sessions (on bi-lateral and multi-lateral basis), common exercises, exchange of personnel and other training cooperation activities, would bring benefits. Current efforts towards greater coordination have been fostered (e.g. through the recent establishment of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and the relevant revisions of the Founding Regulations of EFCA and EMSA), taking place on the northern shore of the western Mediterranean region, should inspire similar developments across the western Mediterranean region as a whole.

Due to the humanitarian consequences of illegal migration flows trying to cross the western Mediterranean, maritime surveillance operations in the region often move to contingent actions aimed at rescuing migrants under control of national responsible bodies. The importance and unpredictability of the flows often exceed the capacities of locally involved coastguard functions and bodies. In this respect,

---

[1] Described in Report 3 to be soon published on the initiative website (http://www.westmed-initiative.eu)

the limited cooperation across the whole sub-sea basin poses some challenges with respect to the needed flexibility of local operations (OSCE 2014[2]), to respond to the magnitude of illegal migration flows and to quickly adapt to the unpredictable evolution of the path of such flows.

Discussion on potential interventions to be supported by the initiative

Coastguard functions cooperation development

- What are the Coast guard functions which can mainly take benefit from an enhanced cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean?
- How can enhanced cooperation between EU Member States and Western Mediterranean non-EU coastal States in the field of maritime safety and protection of the marine environment support sustainable development of maritime activities in the region?
- How can cooperation among training centres be developed, so to enhance mutual understanding and promote joint training sessions (on bi-lateral and multi-lateral basis), common exercises, exchange of personnel and other training cooperation activities?
- How can Member States and Frontex/EMSA/EFCA facilitate joint services and information-sharing covering different coast guard functions (maritime safety and security, sea border control, search and rescue, fisheries control etc) with the Northern African countries, thereby establishing a regular and permanent cooperation of coast guards in the region?
- How to support national equipment and capacity building in the field of Vessel Traffic Service – VTS (capacity building, training) providing support, administrative assistance and training of personnel (VTS Operator/ Supervisor/ Manager)?
- How to improve Maritime Search and Rescue Cooperation, by developing SAR capabilities and promoting joint activities and exercises among the national authorities?
- Which level of intervention and work to be taken on by the Mediterranean coastguard functions forum (MEDFORUM) to support north/south cooperation? Is a sub-basin-level forum relevant to foster greater dialogue and cooperation?
- How can SAFEMED IV project further support enhanced cooperation between EU Member States and Western Mediterranean non-EU coastal States?

Towards a common approach to maritime surveillance, skills development and capacity building?

- Which maritime data sharing platforms are helpful in the view of southern countries (Safe Sea Net/CECIS)?
- How an enhanced data sharing can improve the effective use of operational capabilities and support cross border cooperation ?
- How to support national capacity building in the field of Vessel Traffic Service – VTS (capacity building, training) providing administrative assistance and training of personnel (VTS Operator/ Supervisor/ Manager)?
- Could maritime highways initiatives be effective in developing such capacities for regulation (MSP) and maritime safety?
- How an enhanced maritime surveillance cooperation and data sharing can contribute to maritime safety and environmental marine quality across the region?
- How to tackle illegal activities (IUU fishing, illegal migration and smuggling)?
- Which of the actions above could be supported through SAFEMED IV?

---

[2] http://www.osce.org/secretariat/108481?download=true

- How to fully implement and significantly enhance ongoing projects/initiatives in the area of border surveillance?

- How to strengthen sea border surveillance, establish and improve information sharing and a corresponding reaction on irregular migration, illicit trafficking and emergencies at sea