

Questions regarding Operation IRINI:

- 1. As part of the EU's CSDP missions and operations, EUNAVFORMED Operation IRINI has set sail into the complex waters of the Mediterranean in 2020 in order to enforce the UN's arms embargo on Libya and has an important record of achievements so far. What are some of the main challenges for the operation moving ahead?**

Operation IRINI is playing a significant role with regards the uncertain and unstable political and security situation in Libya. The last important seizures operated by IRINI, have positively contributed to the stabilization process of the country and to avoid further violence escalations. Moreover, it has sent a clear message of deterrence to embargo breakers.

IRINI is the only actor directly supporting the implementation of the UN arms embargo on Libya, delivering effectively and impartially on its mandate in the high sea.

The last renewal of the UNSCR 2292/2016 resolution related to the arms Embargo and the extension of the EU mandate are two clear evidences of the effectiveness of IRINI and the confidence of International Community.

As stated also in the latest update of the EU Maritime Security Strategy and in the Strategic Compass, the strategic environment of the maritime domain is experiencing a significant evolution, including territorial disputes, competition for natural resources, threats to freedom of navigation, spread of illicit activities and, last but not least, new cyber and hybrid threats.

EU is therefore strengthening its engagement in securing the maritime domain and stepping up activities at sea, notably the CSDP Operations like IRINI, reinforcing the information exchange capabilities and the EU C4I structure, promoting the Integrated Approaches with all the stakeholders in the Area Of Operations and enhancing the Intelligence Support.

We face a deterioration of the Geopolitical situation in a number of African countries. This contributes to facilitate and increase illicit trafficking (e.g. from Sahel to Libya and vice versa) and, much worse, humans smuggling towards Europe with clear reverberation in IRINI's Area of Operations.

The current situation in Libya is characterized by the absence of a unified, recognized and reliable counterpart with whom to establish the necessary arrangements. The path to new elections is a challenge and will remain so for some time. IRINI is therefore unable to implement one of its secondary tasks regarding the Capacity Building and Training of the Libyan Institutions responsible for Law Enforcement and Search and Rescue in the waters of Libyan responsibility.

- 2. Can EUNAVFORMED Operation IRINI enter Libyan territorial waters and conduct maritime interdictions there?**

As stated in the Council Decision establishing IRINI and in accordance with the relevant UNSCRs and the International Law, IRINI carry out his tasks only on the high sea, outside TTW of any Coastal State, including Libya.

3. If illegal weapons are found, what is the procedure and who is in charge of legal proceedings against the smugglers?

The Embargo related SC Resolutions are aimed at seizing illegally shipped weapons or arms related materials to Libya and from Libya, not at persecuting single individuals.

Following a vessel inspection, the cargo found in violation of the embargo, is seized and, if necessary for its disembarkation, the ship diverted to an EU port where it can be further searched and finally released.

Respecting the national rules of the country of diversion, the Operation Commander proposes options for the disposal of the seized material to the EU Political and Security Committee responsible for the final decision.

4. Does Operation IRINI conduct naval exercises with partners in the Mediterranean as Operation ATALANTA does in the Gulf of Aden? For instance, do you cooperate with NATO's Operation Sea Guardian in the Mediterranean?

IRINI's training requirements are very high according to the needs to effectively operate in a challenging environment such as the Mediterranean Sea.

Before to join the Operation, all IRINI's assets have to achieve the full readiness in conducting the whole spectrum of Maritime Interdiction Operations. At beginning of their deployment, a structured integration training package is planned in order to internalize the IRINI procedures.

Specific training activities are conducted in the period of assignment and also "encounter exercise" opportunities are exploited with other partners (including NATO), whenever the operational situation allows.

Although NATO Operation Sea Guardian and EUNAVFORMED have different missions and objectives, there is always an open channel available to cooperate if necessary, including flight activities deconfliction.

EUNAVFOR MED Operation IRINI represents a significant opportunity for Member States to enhance interoperability with other European armed forces and to improve MIO capability.

5. Besides enforcing the arms embargo in Libya, Has Operation Irini secondary tasks? What are the main difficulties in tackling those?

Operation IRINI secondary Tasks include Gathering Information on Oil Smuggling (GIOS) from Libya and on the Human Smuggling Business Model

(HSBM). In these cases, no inspections at sea are allowed. IRINI collects all the information available and is in contact with several stakeholders including INTERPOL, EUROPOL, UNHCR, EUBAM, UNSMIL and others.

As said the task of Capacity building and training of the Libyan Institutions responsible for Law Enforcement and SAR at sea in the waters of their responsibility has never started, due the political deadlock in Libya.

6. Finally, how are assets allocated for Operation Iriini?

The Combined Joint Statement Of Requirements (CJSOR) agreed by the Member States is classified. All Member States provide, on the base of their possibilities and political will, the necessary assets for the operation and the manning for the Operational Headquarters here in Rome and the Force Headquarters.

Representatives of the EU Member States meet in the Global Force Generation Conferences under the aegis of the EU Military Staff and anticipate their contributions.