



OPERATION EUNAVFOR MED IRINI

OP EUNAVFOR MED IRINI: Greece takes over the Force Command

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Taranto, Italy – 19 October 2020

The new Force Commander of Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI is Commodore Theodoros Mikropoulos from Greece. Starting from today, he will take over the command of assets at sea, while Italy's Rear Admiral Fabio Agostini will continue to guide the Operation from the Operational Headquarters in Rome.

Mikropoulos, from the Hellenic Navy, born in Athens in 1965, has served in a wide variety of command and staff appointments at the tactical, Operational and strategic levels.

He served as Chief of Staff of the EU Operational Headquarters (OHQ) of Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI in Rome until beginning of October. Commodore Mikropoulos succeeds Rear Admiral Ettore Socci from the Italian Navy.

“The challenge that Commodore Mikropoulos is called to face is key for the accomplishment of the mandate that the Council of the European Union has assigned to Operation IRINI”, said Admiral Fabio Agostini, Operational Commander of EUNAVFOR MED IRINI, in his speech on board the new Flagship, the Hellenic Frigate ADRIAS during the Change of Command Ceremony.

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Admiral Agostini also underlined the importance of the Force Headquarter Staff and the relationship developed with the new Force Commander, after having already worked with him in the OHQ. “Theodoros Mikropoulos, with the passion and loyalty he has always shown, displays the human and professional qualities essential to perform the work of Force Commander. He will ensure that the Operation continues to be fully accomplished amid such a complex operating environment, further complicated by the Covid-19 pandemic” said Agostini.

“Operation IRINI was born in full Covid-19 pandemic but it has already delivered some significant results in terms of collection of information and deterrent effect on both arms trafficking and oil smuggling sectors. These results have been achieved in no small part thanks to the dedicated and tireless work of the former Force Commander Admiral Ettore Socci during his mandate” concluded Operation Commander, Admiral Fabio Agostini.

The information collected on illicit activities has been reported to the United Nations Panel of Experts for Libya with which IRINI has developed a collaborative relationship.

Bravo Zulu to Adm Socci!

Fair wind and following seas to Commodore Mikropoulos!

Remarks

The Force Commander is the Commander of the assets (naval and aerial) deployed in the Area of Operation. He is appointed by the Council upon Operation Commander’s proposal and EU Military Committee’s endorsement. The Force Commander acts under the authority of the Operation Commander. For the position of Force Commander, Italy and Greece will alternate on a half-yearly basis.

The flagship is the naval unit on which the Force Commander is embarked with his Force Headquarters. The flagship will alternate along with the Force Commander. The Greek Force Commander will then be deployed on a Hellenic Navy unit.

Operation IRINI – named as the Greek word for “peace” – was planned in a very short timeframe and launched on 31 March 2020, following a decision by the Council of the European Union. The main task is the implementation of the arms embargo on Libya under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. The Operation has also secondary tasks, including monitoring illegal oil trafficking from Libya, contributing to countering human trafficking and smuggling activities (through air monitoring) and contributing to the training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy.

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The Operation - that reached the Full Operation Capability in September 2020 - can count on four ships, five aircrafts and 600 personnel.

In total, about 21 countries of the European Union are participating, with staff or assets, in Operation IRINI, which also counts on the support of satellite images provided by the European Union Satellite Centre (SatCen).



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