

**Shared Awareness and Deconfliction in the Mediterranean
SHADE MED**

**Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean
after the global pandemic**

Conference Book



Opération EUNAVFORMED IRINI

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“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean After the global pandemic”

Rear Admiral Fabio Agostini

Operation Commander of Operation EUNAVFOR MED

Welcome address

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
It is a great privilege this morning to welcome you all to the ninth edition of the Shared Awareness and De-confliction in the Mediterranean Conference. This event allows all the people connected to reflect about the challenges of the Region and possible future perspectives. This year's most remarkable phenomenon has undoubtedly been the Covid-19 pandemic that has caused so many victims around the world, at the same time deeply affecting the people's lives as well as economies of the whole world. So, the theme of this year's SHADE MED - “Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean after the global pandemic” – will help shed light on different possible scenarios and, through high-level speakers, will pave the way for possible new initiatives in common for the benefit of all actors that have interests and share objectives related to this strategic sea. I really care about this international seminar which, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will take place online.

For two intense days, a virtual arena with more than 250 participants from 30 countries, 50 organizations and 25 international journalists, all interested in the Mediterranean area, will be connected with the headquarters of the European Union Operation IRINI that I have the honour to command. Hopefully, the technology will assist us to follow the event without problems. The effects of the pandemic are likely to continue for a while, as its impact has already changed the way we live and interact with each other. This is visible also in the Mediterranean basin, which represents a fundamental global cross-road in the world. The Mare Nostrum is a liquid bridge with commercial connections ranging from the Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific. We are talking about an area with a very complex web of interrelations and a very high rate of economic and cultural exchanges among historical and new players. The Mediterranean is a fulcrum between three continents, each one with own

peculiarities. It is a wide meeting point for different cultures, beliefs and societies: a setting for unending migrations since the very beginning of Civilization, as well as a theatre for conflicts. A universe of differences that, rather than being appreciated for their wealth, ends up too often being a pretext for political, economic and religious clashes. The stability of the area is an essential element for the Global security.

It is a fact that a great number of the world's crises originate in the Mediterranean basin — the spread of Da'esh, Libya's instability, the Syrian war, tension in Lebanon, terrorist fighters, militias and contractors, the migration crisis and regional contentions. The “Sea amongst Lands”, as its name implies, includes developments in surrounding regions as the Gulf of Guinea, the Sahel, the Mashrek, the Red Sea, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean. The basin provides, then, multiple strategic challenges, significantly aggravated by the ongoing pandemic. It is a space where we are witnessing humanitarian crisis and migration flows, contraction of key sectors as Tourism and Transports, challenges to the Shipping community, rethinking of energy choices, but also considerable changes in information spreading and press freedom.

Therefore, we deem it necessary to think, understand and share ideas on how to deal with the current period and what will follow the pandemic at an economic, social and structural level in the Mediterranean area. EUNAVFORMED IRINI is operating right at the heart of the Mediterranean Sea in order to ensure the respect of United Nations' Arms Embargo regarding Libya, but also to stem the illegal flows of oil smuggling, human trafficking and, hopefully soon, train the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy. IRINI is a part of a process involving political, military, economic and humanitarian tracks agreed last February at the Berlin's Conference. This represents the European Union truly holistic approach to the solution of the long-lasting conflict in Libya.

Operation IRINI is not the only player dealing with

the Mediterranean Sea. Therefore, cooperation should be enhanced with other actors and countries even outside the European Union. Together we can do much better, not just to address illicit trafficking, but also to preserve the regional economy affected by insecurity of the area. In the context of Operation IRINI, we have tried to address these issues by adopting several measures, always keeping an impartial, balanced and positive attitude.

However, we are aware that there is a lot more to do, at various levels (not only operational) in order to reasonably manage all the historical Mediterranean challenges and those added by Covid-19 pandemic. IRINI,

through the Shade Med Conference, has the ambition to provide a proactive contribution. Remaining equidistant from the parties, we work day by day to guarantee stability and security in the central Mediterranean. Our future is written in this sea, the cradle of civilization, a blue road for the future, a scenario of challenges and great opportunities that the Covid-19 pandemic obliges us to seize. It is our job to be effective, proactive and vigilant for the common welfare.

In conclusion, I hope you will enjoy the event and I wish you all fruitful and enriching exchanges during these two days.

“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean After the global pandemic”

Mr. Joseph Borrell

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

I am truly pleased to address you on the occasion of the SHADE MED Conference to share some thoughts on the European Union's strategic role in the Mediterranean.

As someone who grew up by the shores of the *Mare Nostrum*, I know very well the importance that this culturally diverse and rich region - a crossroads of three continents and a gateway to Europe - has for the European Union.

It saddens me to see a once peaceful region become increasingly unstable, a volatile region where the European Union faces increasing problems: war continues to ravage Libya and Syria, and no end for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is in sight. Tensions continue to increase in the Eastern Mediterranean. There is a structural instability in Lebanon and the pressure linked to migration flows continues.

But despite the ongoing pandemic, 2020 has also brought some good news, in particular in Libya, unexpectedly. The launch of the Berlin International Conference and the UN-facilitated Libyan Political Dialogue Forum give us cautious hope for a return to peace and stability in the country. Besides, the recent ceasefire agreement, reached by the contending parts, is an important step in the right direction. We, at the European Union, are ready to support the implementation with concrete actions at all levels, mobilising the full range of our tools - from diplomatic engagement to our CSDP instruments, always in the framework of and in support of the UN-led process.

Of course, Operation IRINI - and thanks to Operation IRINI for this meeting - is the concrete illus-

tration of our commitment to de-escalate the conflict and pave the way for a sustainable peace agreement. An impartial tool at the disposal of the international community.

Drawing on aerial, naval and satellite assets, it is already delivering tangible results. Since its launch in March, IRINI has conducted 3 inspections, 50 friendly approaches, more than 130 hailings, and it has shared 16 special reports with the UN Panel of Experts on violations of the arms embargo¹. At the same time, we have backed IRINI's actions with sanctions against private entities or individuals violating the arms embargo.

Ladies and gentlemen, this proves that IRINI is a clear demonstration of the European Union's commitment to creating the conditions for a sustainable solution to the conflict in Libya and to bringing back peace and stability to the region.

Yet, the European Union cannot do this alone. It is now time for all other members of the United Nations to take their share of responsibility and stop fuelling a conflict that has already caused too much pain and losses. We have the historical opportunity to put an end to the conflict. We have a responsibility to work together for the security and stability of the Mediterranean.

Forums such as the SHADE MED can be added value here, by creating a space to exchange views and best practices and coordinate our efforts.

All of us are sharing the same goal: a more secure and stable *Mare Nostrum*. So let us seize the momentum and work together to bring peace and stability back to the shores of our Mediterranean.

Thank you for your efforts, thank you for your work.

¹ Figures updated as of 18 November 2020.



“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean After the global pandemic”

Gen. Claudio Graziano
Chairman of the EU Military Committee

Introduction

Many thanks to Rear Admiral Fabio Agostini and his staff for organizing this event. First of all, let me tell you, I wished we all had an opportunity to gather in Rome in-person. In my role of primary point of contact for EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) military missions and operations, which in this moment insist mainly on the enlarged Mediterranean area, both at sea and ashore, and as military advisor to the High Representative/Vice President Mr. Borrell, I was really keen to meet you, but I remain confident that we will and must do that soon, as nothing can replace physical presence. The pandemic has contributed to complicate all aspects of our lives, and so the subject of this conference is particularly timely and appropriated. The pandemic has also directly affected many of the security challenges we were facing before the outbreak. And this scenario urgently calls for a joint approach by all of us. If we show resilience, we will come out of this crisis stronger than before. I am sure that in the next two days you will discuss in-depth, and from different angles, the need for this improved cooperation.

Covid – existing crises – old and new challenges

Without a doubt, the New Year did not start very well: the events in Libya and Iraq, in fact not a real surprise, were followed by the deterioration of the security situation in the East Mediterranean Sea - as already mentioned by Mr. Borrell - in Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and in Lebanon, with state actors seeking new roles, pursuing their strategies, often filling gaps left by others. On top of this, the pandemic has further contributed to worsen a security scenario already compromised by existing threats, like international terrorism, failed states, uncontrolled migration, disinformation, hybrid and cyber-attacks. And finally, this crisis has also brought to our attention other threats in non-conventional domains, like health, climate, or even energy, an issue we will definitely have to deal with, for the next decade or more. The future security

situation will then be much more complex than the one we are experiencing nowadays, with no shortage of crises.

Impact of pandemic on the Mediterranean Region

As we know, while the impact of the pandemic has been severe at global level, it had an even stronger effect in those regions already devastated by conflicts, and in those countries with fragile socioeconomic conditions. And this is especially true in the broader Mediterranean area, from Libya to Sahel, with magmatic dynamics filled with crises, turning this region into one of the most volatile in the world, with geopolitical repercussions which go far beyond its geographical borders. Therefore, the Mediterranean Sea has definitely come back as the leading centre of gravity for wider geopolitical balances, being at the crossroads of three continents, a gateway to Europe, and the terminal of the crises insisting in the MENA region and in Sahel. And here is where Europe has turned his attention: towards Africa and the root causes of the most worrying problems, what I call the *triangle of instability*, made of international terrorism, illegal migration, and overall degraded security in the whole region.

Libya and the great powers competition

Among others, the Libyan crisis, which has been strangling the country for over a decade and further aggravating the regional situation, exemplifies the current chaos in the Mediterranean, with its repercussions for the security of Europe and its surroundings. And I consider the Libyan case to be extremely important, because its solution could bring a model of cooperation for the whole region. In particular, what we observe in Libya, nowadays, is that some external actors got directly involved in the conflict, further complicating the already complex situation, bringing unilateral strategies, exploiting proxy wars to continue their competition abroad. These strategies have been sending out a clear message also to other players, both regionally and externally.

A Choral Response

In the unfortunate circumstances dominated by COVID, therefore, it is obvious how some new or old adversaries, like never-resting terrorists, are taking advantage of the situation. Something that can be addressed only by an urgent and chorale reaction by all stakeholders, starting by addressing the root causes of the problems in the region. In first place, by all EU Member States, which must speak at their best with a unified voice, engaging in all EU Defence initiatives, providing resources to CSDP missions and operations, and thus contributing to the achievement of the agreed LoA. Secondly, by a committed EU capable of exploiting at full its integrated approach, made of a complete set of instruments: the political, the diplomatic, the economic, and yes, also the military, since we have learned that if there are no pure military solutions to crises, no crisis can be solved without the use of military means, in an effective combination of soft and hard power. Something that the EU must implement decisively, by practicing the language of power, and not just speaking it! And finally, by all international stakeholders, in partnership - one of the principal elements of EU Global Strategy: the EU, with the UN, the African Union and, of course, with NATO, being the Alliance our first, natural partner in this endeavor, particularly for our closest crises.

Europe's opportunity

The EU has therefore a great opportunity to consolidate its network of cooperation, as no single actor could tackle these challenges alone. This is a real and urgent necessity, also looking at how COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the dramatic discrepancy between the scale of current challenges and the weakness of global governance. A gap that already existed before, but that has become more evident since the beginning of this year. Hence, the absolute need to strengthen ties with all relevant regional organisations for concrete and actionable initiatives, like crisis management, or capacity building, an area of cooperation where the Union has proved itself capable of expressing a true excellence. In Sahel, but also elsewhere in Africa, where we may need to even increase our engagement, looking at the latest developments like the *coup* in Mali, tensions in Ethiopia or the spreading violence in the whole region, suggesting that more instability may characterise the upcoming scenarios. In regard to the mentioned contexts, let me recall that these are some of the areas where the EU, in

line with its 2016 Global Strategy and its increased level of ambition, has found an autonomous space, to engage and act more as a *global security provider*, in coherence with a renewed impetus towards strategic autonomy. A strategic autonomy that does not mean autonomy from someone, but autonomy to do something alone, or in better cooperation with partners, if possible.

Cooperation with NATO

In this regard, it must be noted that EU and NATO (although being different organisations with different problems) have walked side by side, in a sort of continuity, to today's solid partnership. On the other hand, we must also admit that a great potential for cooperation remains yet to be exploited, from the strategic to the tactical level. The EU, on its side, has made a lot of efforts to contribute to this relationship with NATO with a double approach:

1. Indirectly, thanks to the set of EU Defence initiatives, creating new tools like the Headline Goal, CARD, PESCO, and the EDF, practical ways for the Member States to spend better, and less, for those capabilities. All initiatives – it must be noted – crafted to be in synergy with the NATO Defence Planning Process, to avoid duplications and waste of resources. Because, let me stress, what is good for the EU is good for NATO, in line with the single set of forces principle;

2. But also directly, mainly through CSDP military missions and operations. In fact, all the previous efforts must be considered instrumental for the effective conduct of our CSDP military missions and operations, which will result in a direct way to support NATO since our objectives are coherent and complementary with the ones of the Alliance.

That said, of course, we should try to overcome some of the current obstacles to our cooperation with NATO, exploiting ways for an effective collaboration at strategic, operational and particularly tactical level, where we should not let political issues impede the necessary interaction in the field. A problem we might easily spot in the Mediterranean Sea, between Operation Irini and Sea Guardian: in a perfect world, we would have had one single operation, but nowadays we could and should aim at an improved cooperation.

Operation Irini

In regard to Operation Irini, I would like to emphasize,

as this is the most visible and instrumental CSDP activity in the Mediterranean Sea, the only EU military operation for Libya, through which the EU can really boost the perception of the EU Defence willing and capable to take its responsibility as a Security Provider. Of course, with an effective cooperation with all partners, demonstrating an impartial commitment towards the region's stability, a model for cooperation for the whole International Community. As it stands, though, Operation IRINI is still lacking some essential contributions from Member States, so to be able to fully achieve the current mandate, a mandate that could be eventually expanded, pending political decisions, for a more integrated role for the solution of the crisis. Nevertheless, given the circumstances, we must all praise the Operation for the considerable results achieved, also in spite of the pandemic.

Impact of Covid on EU CSDP - lessons identified

Yes, because it is a fact that all our CSDP missions and operations had to deal directly with the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, for their mandate and in particular in regard to the cooperation with Host Nations. In fact, as in any other environment, a number of mitigating measures had to be put in place, with the double objective of safeguarding the health of our deployed personnel, while guaranteeing at best the accomplishment of the mandate. The overall response across missions and operations was generally positive: while some training activities had to be put temporarily on hold, the pandemic had a lower impact on the executive operations, especially the maritime ones, which were able to go through the crisis without discontinuity. Additionally, it is important to note how, besides carrying on their specific mandates, our missions and operations cooperated with the Host Nations on all efforts to contain the pandemic, within any of their means and capabilities. In this regard, as a centralized coordination tool at HQ Level, we established an internal Task Force on COVID-19, to collect data and respond to in-

quiries, informing the decision-making processes.

After few months from the outbreak, as first lessons, we can highlight that there are areas where we shall be able to do more, working ahead on our resilience, starting from the need to review contingency and business continuity planning. Additionally, we will have to improve coordination for healthy related emergencies, by fostering partnerships, sharing best practices, policies and documentation, awareness of medical stockpiles and, whenever possible, through training and dedicated joint exercises. In the specific circumstances, though, two shortfalls mostly brought concern: the shortage of medical teams and the lack of adequate communication equipment. While the latter one represents a long-standing and known issue, a specific element that the pandemic emphasised was the importance of disposing adequate military medical teams, both in terms of quality and quantity, ready to be deployed. And this is even more relevant if we note that properly trained and equipped military medical teams, thanks to their inherent peculiarities, could be useful for many purposes, like a mission in Mali, or an intervention on board of a ship, or in support of national authorities and Host Nations, fighting the pandemic.

Conclusion

And I conclude. While we all continue to struggle with the measures to contain the pandemic, professionally - and personally, I would say - we should absolutely avoid missing the unique chance that this crisis is bringing for improving our resilience. The pandemic has clearly surfaced some of our weaknesses, especially collectively, and it would be simply unacceptable not to draw serious lessons, working swiftly on the necessary remedies, in order to approach these challenges together, in a shared path, for a worthwhile legacy.

Thank you all, and I wish you a very fruitful conference.



“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean after the global pandemic”

Panel One: “The Mediterranean region in 2020: a historical arena connecting three continents, and their population, striving for stability”

Amb. José Antonio Sabadell
Head of Delegation of the European Union to Libya

To understand the impact of the Libyan crisis, I would like to start by mentioning some preliminary ideas and figures that can help us visualise the dimension of both the challenges and the opportunities.

Firstly, Libya is a very large country, with 1.7 million square kilometres and a population of 7 million people, 3 of which live in Tripoli. That means that 4 million people live in a surface that is equivalent to Spain, France, Italy and Germany put together. That can give us an idea of how challenging can be to control the territory.

The second point is that Libya is a very rich country. It may not feel this way if one visits it right now, but according to National Oil Corporation (NOC), the oil generated since 2011, since the revolution, equates 250 billion euros. Moreover, there is a currently frozen fund, the Libyan Investment Authority that, according to the last estimate, amounts for around 60 billion euros. It could all potentially be at the disposal of Libyan development.

This framework obviously has a translation in terms of migration. Until 2011, 1.8 million foreign workers lived in Libya (that was their final destination, while nowadays they are around 600.000 - some of whom consider Libya only a transit country).

If, at some point in the near future, the Libyan political and economic situation changes, it will not only have an impact on the country itself, but also on the surrounding region: Libya's strategic importance is pivotal and crucial for the present and future of the Mediterranean basin, North Africa and the Sahel.

It is well known that the evolution of Libya as we know it today started in 2011 with a revolt having a lot in common with other uprisings spread in the Arab world the same year, notably for what concerns the call for dignity. Again, since it is a wealthy country, the Libyan case was probably focused more on political topics and less on the socio-economic situation, but it was not spared from what at the time was called “Arab Springs”, Arab revolutions.

Unfortunately, particularly starting from 2014, the popular uprising was followed by a period of chaos and uncertainty, due to three specific factors that exacerbated the instability and defined the current situation.

On the one hand, as a heritage of the Gaddafi era, the country lacked, and still lacks, social structures, political organisations, and institutions - official or unofficial. It is not easy to understand who represents who; when we talk about tribal representation, for instance, we are referring to an extremely complex framework.

On the other hand, there are international interventions. Libya is not *only* a proxy war, but it is *also* a proxy war. It is a civil war; at the same time, it is a conflict fought by local agents acting under an external input; some other times, actual external agents are the ones battling on the ground. It is much more than “a war by telecommand”: foreign actors play a key central role in the Libyan conflict and it is increasingly becoming a regional and global play where local groups only partly engage.

The third factor that defines where we are at and how events will unfold concerns the dynamics of the conflict themselves. Sometimes we forget about the fact that conflicts transform societies. Indeed, the present Libyan society is very different from what it was at the beginning of the fighting. War relations have changed, new interests have been created, and certain groups are even interested in the continuation of the clashes.

These three factors - the lack of institutions and representation, the intervention of international actors, and the dynamics of the conflict themselves - currently deeply define and shape the situation.

At the same time, though, I think we may be at the end of the conflict cycle. Popular pressure is becoming ever more strong, managing to influence the situation and to be noticed by both sides, in the East and the West. Since a couple of months, very significant progress has been made: oil production and exports resumed, meaning that resources will be available for national development;

the ceasefire is not only working in practical terms, but concrete deals on how to implement it are being signed; the political dialogue is moving forward, with important agreements on elections and some ideas about *interim* institutions.

For the time being, a lot still needs to be done, the situation is very fragile and we will need to follow it very closely. But I do think there is room for hope and that this conflict cycle may be ending.

With all that being said, what about the European Union? And what should we be doing in this evolving environment?

Foremost, we need to bear in mind that the European Union has invested heavily in Libya - although it is a rich country and future cooperation will need to focus and be redirected towards social services, governance and other areas.

Between 2014 and 2020, the European Union has dedicated around €700 million to different programmes of cooperation in the country. Yet, if the situation in Libya improves, we will have to reassess the way we cooperate with Libyans. And in this particular case the timing works very well, since we are working at a new programming cycle for the European Union in the period spanning from 2021 to 2027.

If the ceasefire holds and the political situation moves forward, we will need to re-balance our efforts and make the focus of our support shift from finance towards governance, security sector reforms, and state-building.

There are new instruments, like blending, by which private and public capitals can be mixed; there are infrastructures that can be rebuilt and then generate jobs; there are the green economy and solar energy. There is a huge potential for cooperation.

The second framework we are engaged in, and which carries a great political impact, is migration. We are working on two different but intertwined objectives: border control and the protection of migrants. While some groups often focus on one specific task tending to forget the other one, as European Union, we must target both of them: we do need border control, and yet, it cannot come at the price of inhuman treatment of migrants. Sometimes it is like the message of reinforcing border control reaches actors on the ground loud and clear, while the fact that we are not ready to accept arbitrary attention over human rights is lost in

translation. A reinforcement of both objectives is urgent: border control is needed, but it cannot be compatible with the mistreatment of migrants and refugees.

At the same time, we have to acquire a wider, more comprehensive view of migration as well. In the last few years, Libya has witnessed larger flows of migrants from surrounding nations than it did in the past, and when the situation will improve - probably in the short term -, the country will also absorb migrants from the rest of the region. Taking this into account, our migration policy towards Libya in the coming years should not be so much focused border control anymore, but rather elaborate a plan that will provide the country with the foreign workers that will be needed to rebuild the Libyan economy.

As our third area of collaboration with Libya, we are supporting the negotiations in all the Berlin Process' tracks. We are working heavily on the political track, and we coordinate with UNSMIL in supporting constructive actors and isolating spoilers with restrictive measure when is needed. I firmly believe that recognising UNSMIL as the only track that can provide a comprehensive solution for Libya is key at this point. The date for elections has been agreed - they should happen on the 24th of December 2021 -, and we are ready to support these elections in both political and technical terms, from observation to every other aspect that is necessary.

In this regard, the dangers of hate speech and disinformation particularly concern me: being already challenging for several Western democracies, they threaten Libya even more, especially in the context of an electoral campaign.

All our support is, and will of course remain, in accordance with the perspective of human rights and the protection and inclusion of population, not least of those more vulnerable.

As mentioned before, we are committed to the Libyan state-building process in economic terms too, and, in particular, we have a special responsibility as co-chairs of the Economic Working Group. We are trying to improve the delivery of basic services throughout the country, as well as working on the distribution of the income from oil, so that all the Libyan parts can receive their fair share - crucial for the effectiveness of the peace process. Our support also involves the drafting of long-term economic reforms that include

modifying the exchange rate system, as well as ending or rationalising the subsidies.

The fourth track where we are working on, in the context of the Berlin Process, is security, which is the basis for the progress in all other areas. As European Union, we have several tools on the ground, and we are ready to re-task them or reconsider their mandate if it is necessary and requested by Libyan authorities.

I will start from the probably less-known of these instruments, the European Union Liaison and Planning Cell (EULPC), which is based at the EU Delegation offices and provides military expertise, mostly on planning, for the Delegation, for member states, and also, when requested, for UNSMIL. It delivers inputs in terms of ceasefire monitoring or the security sector reforms as well.

The second tool already on the ground is the European Union Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM), based in Tripoli: it focuses on border management, and includes also law enforcement and criminal justice activities. In the future, it may become involved mostly in the south of the country with an integrated approach that would include not only border control as such, but also development in security mediation and other tasks. EUBAM can potentially be an extremely important tool for the future of Libya and the region.

Last but not least, EUNAVFOR MED Operation IRINI is mandated to enforce the UN arms embargo, and has competencies in terms of capacity building and training. It is worth mentioning that IRINI is sometimes perceived by Libyan authorities as unbalanced, focusing the implementation of the arms embargo more

towards the West than towards the East. But I think that Admiral Agostini's last visit to the country has dispelled these ideas and, frankly speaking, we are witnessing a quite positive reaction to IRINI's work, always taking seriously the mandate's limitations.

In conclusion, I think that my main message would be that the European Union should be the actor of choice to improve the situation in Libya. We have an integrated toolbox that includes a wide range of measures and activities: from security and hard security instruments, to nation building, human rights, development and soft financing. If we are able to use such toolbox in a consistent manner, we will succeed in contributing significantly to the future of Libya.

To this end, we cannot try to pick and choose what we want to solve; we cannot decide that our priority is migration, rather than security, economy or human rights. These tasks and challenges are all so interlinked with each other that if we try to solve just one of them, we will end up forgetting the rest and being counterproductive, with the dynamics of the conflict eating up the single achievements. Progress will be real only if all topics are addressed comprehensively and simultaneously. The conflict is organising in clusters and it has concentric circles: if we do not work on all of them at the same time, we will not be effective.

As European Union, we want Libyans to succeed and take control of their own country. We are neighbours, and I cannot think of anything that is good for Libya that is not also good for us, and the other way around. Anything that is bad for Libya is bad for us as Europeans.



“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean after the global pandemic”

Panel One: “The Mediterranean region in 2020: a historical arena connecting three continents, and their population, striving for stability”

VADM (Ret.) Pascal Ausseur
Mediterranean Foundation for Strategic Studies

We are living in time of increasing tension in the Mediterranean region. Today I would like to focus on Russia and Turkey that are, in my view, two of the main challenges for the European Union and its member countries in the area.

We are in a period of global strategic disruption that destabilises the Mediterranean. The main tendency we are observing is the decline of the Westernisation which corresponds to the decline of the major western powers, the United States but also the European countries, in terms of politics, military as well as values and culture. This movement has been increased by the side-effects of the Covid-19. In the nineties, it was the time of the Barcelona Process and of NATO Mediterranean Dialogue; a time where the economy superseded all the cultural, political and security aspects. The Mediterranean area was looking towards Europe: Turkey was intentioned to join the European Union, the Maghreb was supposed to be very near to the EU. This world is now over and looking at the Mediterranean, the end of the Westernisation led to the end of this socio-economic convergence of the two shores of our Sea towards the European model.

Today, the rising discrepancies among the North and the South shores create frustrations and tensions within the countries of the South and between the two shores. These tensions are exploited by authoritarian powers and ideologies.

Another point that leads to the de-Westernisation is the rise of competitors, mostly of them driven by a sentiment of revenge. First of all China, that is now the first economic power, the first political competitor of the United States, and soon also their first military one. Its presence in the Mediterranean is still purely economic but there are premises that its military influence will increase in the future. Russia as well, despite the fact that it still has a relatively weak power in terms of economic, is a strong competitor because of its will to weight from the strategic point of view, its remarkable diplomatic tools, and its powerful military capabilities. In addition,

regional powers are also taking advantage of the opportunities given by the retraction of the US from the area and the weakness of the European Union, to emancipate and expand their geopolitical room of maneuver. I refer to Turkey, Israel, Egypt and, more and more, the Gulf States, such as Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar that are willing to play a role in the Mediterranean.

As said, this increasing competition is accompanied by a sense of resentment towards the West. This feeling, often fueled by authoritarian regimes, has its roots in past events, often not known in Europe, but very well known in those countries. For instance what happened during the Algerian decolonisation, the Treaty of Sèvres, the management of Russia during the post-Soviet era, the opium war in China, and so on and so forth. All these events had a very strong impact on cultural representation of populations and increased the antagonism against the West. This antagonism is fueled as well by Islamist radicalism.

At the same time, Western countries and societies are fragilised by the impact of the internet and the social networks. By comparison, this phenomenon reinforces the authoritarian states, especially in the Mediterranean. Therefore, this trend is not favorable to Europe. The consequence of this is that rules that have prevailed over the past decades are now openly questioned, even violated. We face more and more unilateralism, Neo-Bismarckian agreements and a disinhibited used of force.

For all these reasons, we are now entering into a destabilising period of the Mediterranean, waiting for a new balance of power. The two major strategic players are Russia and Turkey. Both wish to resume their historical imperial position; so, the question is: *which one among them poses a real threat to Europe?* The traditional answer would be Russia, but the position of Turkey towards its neighbors in the south, its socio-economic characteristics, its religious ideology and its revanchist power could raise new issues.

In the Mediterranean, Russia has a strategy that is both classic and destabilising. Classic because the Mediterranean has always been a key point in its maritime strategy for two reasons: it represents the only permanent access to warm seas and the only way to deploy ships in support of operations and for a long time. The Crimea invasion in 2014 to ensure the control of the Black sea, the way Putin handled Turkey in Syria in 2015 to spare Turkey and the lease of Tartus base in 2019 to benefit of a forward bases are concrete examples of this strategy.

Furthermore, Russia presence in the Mediterranean, allows it to have an advance defense of the Black Sea and to protect its southern flank. This represents Russia capacity to hurt, but the Russian fleet cannot be anything than a destructive force. Indeed, it is not as strong as the fleets of its European neighbors or the one of the United States; it is designed more to conduct disruptive actions than to prevail in case of war. This fits with the purpose of Russia to be in opposition with the West and, in the Mediterranean, to demonstrate that it has the capability to deny, at least temporarily, the access to the eastern Mediterranean.

Turkey, on its side, is using its tactical position to develop a new Ottoman strategy based, at the same time, on nationalism and political Islam. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Former Turkey Foreign Affairs Minister and then Prime Minister until 2016, theorised the notion of *pivot state* for his country which was involved in three directions: Europe and the Balkans, Central Asia, and the Near and Middle East. Islam is the element of coherence among all these areas. This represented a shift compared to the choices made by Atatürk and the traditional Turkish policies which used to be with the West. Erdogan initiated this policy in 2010, and ac-

celerated it after the 2016 Turkish coup d'état attempt, because he felt it was the right time to emancipate from the West and strengthen the country that could be once again a major regional player as the Ottoman Empire used to be. Initially, he succeeded, Turkey grew economically, received the blessings of President Obama, and increased its influence during the Arab Springs surfing on the Muslim brotherhood momentum, particularly in Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt. Then it faced problems in Egypt with the overthrown of Morsi, in Syria and in Libya in front of Russia, and internally to. However, both successes and difficulties led Erdogan into a headlong rush carried on regardless any other circumstances, for example, in Syria, in Cyprus, in Libya, in Nagorno-Karabakh. At present, facing no real opposition, there are no reasons for Turkey to change its strategy, except if the new US President decides of drawing him clear red lines.

Turkey is paradoxically a NATO Member State, which is key to contain Russia, and, at the same time, a disruptive force in central and eastern Mediterranean at the expenses of the European Union, Russia itself, and the Arab countries competitors, such as Egypt or the Gulf states.

To conclude, the situation in the MED is very characteristic of the new world. It is tense, unstable, non-predictable, theatre of actions by many stakeholders with different objectives. This situation requires analysis and a case-by-case response without trying to encapsulate problems in a single solution. The multiplicity of solutions must not let us forget about the fact that the EU has to be a strong and independent actor in the area, which is not the case today. If not, we will have no other choice than looking for a painful external protection.

“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean After the global pandemic”

Paolo Magri

President – Italian Institute for International Politics Studies - ISPI

I want to start from the picture of the Mediterranean that Dr. Asseur gave which represents a tense, unstable and unpredictable area. Let me come straight to the question posed by Mr. Natale; how much elected President Biden will be involved in this tense, unstable and unpredictable area?

Differently from President Trump and President Obama, we do not know yet but we can make some considerations or reasoning. At the moment, we know that Joe Biden's victory has been greeted with either relief or disappointment in the Middle East, depending on which countries we look at. Without showing it, of course, the happiest country is Iran. Donald Trump has started a personal political battle with Iran by leaving the nuclear deal and by slapping severe sanctions on Teheran. Differently, during his campaign, Joe Biden declared that if elected he would have rejoined the Iran nuclear deal and engaged in new talks with Teheran. In that case, his presidency will face two main challenges ahead.

The first is that he is not so sure that Iran, after four years of Trump presidency, and a year from now, will still be willing to comply with the nuclear deal. In June 2021, elections will take place in Iran and they could bring to power some representatives from the hardliner faction, who are not so willing to engage in negotiations with the United States. The second challenge, and probably the most important one for the Biden administration, will be how to bring Iran in, without leaving the American allies in the MENA region out. To have Iran back in negotiations, the United States will have to slightly lift some sanctions on Teheran, but we know that Israel and Saudi Arabia are deeply opposed to this as they fear that Teheran will use the money to supporting its proxies in the region, such as Hezbollah and the Houthis. It will be hard for Biden to square the circle as Israel made clear that it will not accept a return of the US to the Iranian nuclear deal. This is the reason why the two countries most unhappy, without showing

that much of course, with the election results, are probably Israel and Saudi Arabia because they know that in Biden they will find a less appealing ally than Trump.

This does not mean that the Biden presidency will reverse the historical alliance between the US and these countries. When it comes to Israel, Biden most likely will not move back the US embassy to Tel Aviv, and he will not reverse the trend of normalisation agreements between Israel and the Arab States, which is an anti-Iran agreement and will act as an anti-Iran negotiations cartel in the next few months. It is new, but it will probably not make Netanyahu any more gifts. There will be probably an attempt to rebuild trust with Palestinians by reopening the office of the Palestinian delegation in Washington DC or by restoring the US finances to UN agencies, and we will probably witness an attempt at mediating between Israel and Palestine, something that was neglected by the Trump administration.

When it comes to Saudi Arabia, here too, we will see a confirmation of the alliance as always. However, differently from what Trump did in the recent past, we will not see any blank check to the Saudi leadership. On the contrary, there will be more pressure on Riyadh, for example, on ending the war in Yemen, which also Saudi Arabia is very anxious to do. Where we will hardly notice differences between the two administrations will be in Syria. In the Syrian conflict, the Trump administration's policy was the continuation of the Obama-era policy. Keep US soldiers in, but avoiding the escalation, and do the utmost to mediate between other foreign powers that intervened there, such as Turkey, Russia, Iran and Israel. The same will happen with Biden who, as we all know, was Vice President in the eight years of the Obama administration and at the time was skeptical of the Obama failed attempt to mark a red line for Assad. We will likely not see any particular difference on Syria. Sanctions will remain in place, US troops will continue to station in the north-east of

the country, and the US will do not likely to permit reconstruction funds to flow into Syria without a political transition. The game-changer for the country lies in whether the incoming US administration will seek to engage Russia in dialogue, providing an opportunity for the US to pave the way for a settlement, and possibly how much the US will want to take part in any reconstruction efforts.

In Libya too, Biden will make the US approach more coherent than Trump's. However, it seems unlikely that his administration, which is expected to contain many of the democrat decision-makers who lived through the fallout of the murder of Ambassador Chris Stevens in Benghazi will put Libya high on the agenda. Clearly, after the 2011 decision to intervene in support of the rebel forces and foster Gaddafi demise, and US administration has chosen to recognise that Libya remains mainly a Mediterranean problem; our problem. Therefore, European countries will have to juggle with that problem alone. Finally, a question mark lies on the future of the relationship with Turkey that gradually deteriorated over the past few years. The temptation for the incoming administration will be to punish Turkey for its many transgression, for its military appraisal against Syrian Kurds, and the purchase of Russian missile defence system. Yet, Turkey remains a NATO Member State and a key country for solving crises in the Mediterranean region, as mentioned before. Probably we will see an attempt from Biden to seek a reset in relationship with Ankara. What remains to be seen is whether the other part wants a reset at this point.

What is the overall picture?

Some changes, some continuity with Obama, even some continuity with Trump. Overall a more balanced predictable policy. Now, Mr. Natale, let me move on your second question, the impact of COVID19 in the MENA region on the crucial point of view of migration. We all know that what happened on the Southern shore has an impact of the cross-Mediterranean irregular migration. Take 2011, forty thousand Tunisians arrived in Italy after the Jasmine revolution. The surge of irregular flow from Libya, to Italy and Malta, started as the Civil war in the country became chronic in mid-2013. Now take the 2015 refugee crisis, it was a product of the Syrian civil war as well as other wars and

political instability in Afghanistan or Iraq. To this, we are now moving in a scenario in which the pandemic has had a clear effect. However, it is not the one that many expected. I think most experts looked at pandemic through the lens of involuntary immobility by closing borders. European countries, in particular, were sealing up and avoiding further migration. The expectation was migrants would have fear to get infected with the new Coronavirus. Well, today it is clear that experts miscalculated, and it is clear that this is the case if we take irregular migration as a case in point, arrivals to Italy are expected to more than triple from 11.000 in 2019 to around 32.000 in mid-November 2020.

Sure, these numbers are hugely smaller to the 150.000/180.000 migrants who arrived irregularly in Italy between 2014 and 2017. Still, they represent a significant increase. At ISPI, we have called it a mini-surge, and COVID-19 pandemic is relevant to explain more than a half of it. It is about Tunisia and the economic impact of the pandemic. Of the thirty-two thousand that arrived in Italy this year, 60% came from that country. It is the reverse of the usual situation in which Libya constituted 90% of sea arrivals between 2014 and 2018. The reason is straightforward. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the tourism industry on which around 10% of the Tunisian workforce relies on. Therefore, since July we have seen a surge in irregular from the country, mostly young unemployed males.

The fact that Italy and other countries are all but forbade irregular migration this year did not allow these young males to enter the EU regularly as seasonal workers. Only the irregular migration channel was left, and Tunisia is geographically close to Italy. It is just a step away.

What does this show us?

It shows that COVID-19 is acting as a multiplier for the risk of irregular movement and at the same time is increasing involuntary immobility. It seems a paradox, but it is not. For migrants that come from Sub-Saharan Africa, increasing borders restrictions do appear to have diminished crossing, at least for those towards Europe. For potential migrants much closer to Europe, such as those coming from Tunisia or those going from Turkey to Greece the possibility to cross remains the same, while the reason to move, in particular lower job

opportunities at home, have increased a lot. This trend risks to become a constant for the next few years, since the COVID-19 pandemic is making many poor poorer.

Irregular migration is becoming more and more a regional matter. Looking at the bright side, an increas-

ingly regional phenomenon might be more easily addressed through a regional solution, and this is what the inter-Mediterranean dialogue, such as the SHADE MED conference promoted today, or the one we are having in Rome at the Rome MED event is all about.



“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean after the global pandemic”

Panel One: “The Mediterranean region in 2020: a historical arena connecting three continents, and their population, striving for stability”

Ms. Irene Fellin

Women in International Security Italy (WIIS)

Thank you Rear Admiral Agostini for organising this seminar and for the kind invitation. We discussed about the importance of involving WIIS Italy in such an occasion and I am honored to bring a female perspective into today's discussion. I am one of the few female speakers at this event; therefore, I carry even more important responsibility to speak on behalf of the many female experts who often do not have the opportunity to seat to the panels together with their male colleagues.

It is said that we need to give women a voice. I would say that it is not exact. Women have a strong voice and a lot to say as well. Some men could still find this unbelievable, but women have a lot to say about economy, agriculture, health and international security. What we need are platforms and enough opportunities to express our knowledge and competencies. Addressing this unfair system and creating more occasions in terms of visibility and participation for women was one of the pushing factors behind the establishment of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN).

This project is promoted and funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and implemented by WIIS Italy and the International Affairs Institute (IAI). It falls within the framework of the Italian National Action Plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). In addition, it was presented as one of the flagship initiatives of the Italian mandate as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, in 2017. It combines Italy's top priorities in the UN Security Council and its role in one of the Mediterranean strategic area. On the one hand, the MWMN keeps a focus on stability, preventive diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. On the other hand, it boosts the role of women, especially in conflicts prevention and resolution processes, with a focus on high-level political positions. At the MWMN, we try to increase the numbers of women working in

mediation and to apply a multi-track approach, which means that we work at a political level, at an informal level with think tanks and academia, and at a community level with women who work on the ground.

Women are precious agents of change. Their active and meaningful participation in the prevention, management and resolution of international conflicts and crisis is one of the pillars of the WPS Agenda. In the past weeks, the WPS Agenda was often mentioned because the international community celebrated the 20th anniversary since the adoption of UNSCR 1325 on 31st of October 2000. This resolution was followed by other nine, and all together constitute the framework of the WPS Agenda. The main message embedded in this Agenda is that war affects women and men in a different way; therefore, the solutions and the provisions to build peace after a conflict need to include a gender perspective and women's participation is key. UNSCR 1325 wanted to highlight the fact that women are important agents of change and they need to be involved as actors in resolving conflicts and building peace. Moreover, they can play a pivotal role in preventing crises. Over the past years, a number of studies demonstrated that when women participate in formal peace processes and are able to exercise their influence, there are positive effects to the likelihood of reaching a peace agreement, to the quality of its content, and its sustainability.

It is important not to simply add women as a token in peace processes, but enable them to have a space of participation and influence. Between 1992 and 2019, women constituted on average only 30% of negotiators, 16% of mediators and 6% of signatories in major peace processes around the world. We can see some minor progress in women's participation, but still 7 out of 10 peace processes do not include women as mediators or as signatories. This indicates that only few women participate in the political life of the country and can have a leadership role as negotiators. In 2020, peace efforts have similar struggles to include women. For instance, we had

around 10% of women negotiators in the Afghan talks and a slightly higher percentage of negotiators recently within Libya political discussions in Tunis, where we saw 17 Libyan women participating in the dialogues, making statements and taking formal commitments. However, there are 0% of women negotiators in Yemen and Libya military talks.

Currently, the Libya peace process is led by a woman chief mediator, Stephanie Turco Williams, Acting Representative of the Secretary General and Head of the United Nations supporting mission in the country. It is the first time, over six years of conflict, that a woman holds this role. The progresses of the past weeks show how important it is to lead by example. It is easier to get more women involved when a woman is leading a political process.

The failure in including women in peace processes ignores what has already been demonstrated in various above-mentioned researches and overlooks the potential strategy to respond more effectively to global security threats.

Why women inclusion is so important? Peace processes fail too frequently and this means that something is missing in how we do business. We need to change the paradigm, to build new strategies and address security in a different way. Women's meaningful participation at peace processes tables increases the likelihood of reaching an agreement because women are often considered as externals - the honest brokers - by the negotiating parties. Women are perceived in a positive way and this perception is rooted in the real exclusion of women within societies; they operate outside the existing power structures and do not control fighting forces. They are perceived to be political impartial mediators if compared to men.

The resulting agreements are more durable and better implemented. Indeed, peace processes do not end with the signatures of the parties, but have to be implemented. If the process is not inclusive, and in saying that I do not refer only to women, but also to ethnic and religious groups among others, civil society cannot take its ownership and make it effective. When civil society organisations participate in the agreements, they are 60% less likely to fail.

Only 3% of the military in UN missions are women and the majority of them is deployed as support staff. This remains a huge problem and it is also an area of

concern for the UN Secretary General António Guterres who, since the beginning of his mandate, committed to double these figures by 5 years. That is why, at the Security Council, Italy decided to support this commitment and to establish the MWMN. One of the goals of the Secretary General was to focus more on conflict prevention, mediation, preventive diplomacy and other non-military solutions to conflict resolutions. The MWMN aims at becoming a tool in support of this goal.

Our project intends to promote the key role of women in the field of conflict mediation, seeking to increase the numbers of women mediators, negotiators and peace builders, with a specific focus on the Mediterranean region. We developed trainings on gender sensitive and inclusive mediation. Yet, although women are more often than men the target of training, they have less opportunities to be officially appointed as mediators or Special Envoys. For this reason, the Network also works to create these opportunities for women to be engaged in the full management of conflicts.

The MWMN is also part of a global initiative. In fact, we work at a local, regional and international level as part of the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks. Its geographical scope includes 26 countries around the Mediterranean Sea. Each country has a different situation; some of them are in open conflicts, others are in a post-conflict reconstruction phase and we need to differentiate our work and the impact of the initiatives through listening to the specific needs of our members – more than 50 now – to build peace in their countries. Our members represent an intergenerational group of women coming from different experiences (civil societies members, diplomats, former military officials), and this diversity represents our added value to understand the different perspectives of today's security challenges.

In some countries, the MWMN launched the so-called antennas. The antennas are composed of women of the same country who are willing to work together and we help them to localize their activities at a political and community level. In this framework, we started to work more on the case of Libya. Recently, we held a closed-door meeting with Stephanie Turco Williams and the Italian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marina Sereni, involving the group of Libyan women part of our network.

Women in Libya need to be involved in all areas during this critical transitional phase and be part of the democratic reconstruction of the country. We have to avoid the stereotypic approach that women need social provisions, because they need to be part of the discussions on politics, economy and security.

Women *per se* represent half of the world population and we know that without them sustainable peace will never be achieved. In countries where there is a higher level of gender equality, the possibility to revamp conflicts is lower; women are more capable to detect in advance the early warning signals of violence.

We are all here today because we share the passion for the Mediterranean. We have the same goal of ensuring stability in the region and addressing root causes of conflicts, that include climate change, poverty, natural resources scarcity and persecution. Gender inequality as well is often one of the main causes of social instability and disorders in this region. All together we need to keep working to protect the lives of women, men, boys and girls from human insecurity, and we must fight for dismantling trafficking networks in the South Mediterranean.

Over the past months, our lives have been shaken due to the unexpected spread of COVID-19. We saw women at the fore front playing a central role to achieve sustainable solutions in every country: both in countries in peace and in conflict-affected ones. Unfortunately, conflicts do not stop because of the pandemic but, due to COVID-19, women are paying a higher price. For example, their access to health and reproductive systems decreases, they have lower revenues... therefore, the gender perspective has to be taken even more into consideration in the response against the pandemic.

Italy has always had a special relation with the Mediterranean. It is the cradle of our culture and traditions, and it is nowadays at the center of current political crises. The Libyan political transition, the situation in Turkey, the management of migratory flows, the battle to defeat intolerant racism and religious discrimination; and, last but not least, the fight for gender equality. Yesterday was the international day of violence against women, we organized the world, as we say, to remember that another pandemic is affecting women's lives and our societies. 1 out of 3 women has experienced a form of violence in her life and this is the same all around the world, from the very north to the south.

Peace cannot be achieved as long as we keep involving only war actors and do not engage peace actors as well. We need to listen to women's voices, respect their perspectives and include their experiences and visions into the planning and execution of security strategies. Until this is not happening, using the words of Rida Al-Tubuly, Director & co-founder of *Together We Build It* and member of the MWMN, *we will miss the full picture*. The construction of an egalitarian and non-discriminatory society is a responsibility that must be shared between men and women, even if sometimes, in some contexts, this may represent an obstacle. Saying that, I refer to Italy as well. The recent video in the public television about the way women should shop in a sexier way shows that there is still a long way to go to change the patriarchal culture of our society.

The way towards peace and stabilisation is a journey and we, as part of the MWMN, are working together, hand in hand, for building a sustainable peace in the Mediterranean region and beyond.



“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean after the global pandemic”

Panel Two: “The development of the blue economy of the Mediterranean is an inestimable possibility to solve many of the challenges and to improve the livelihood of the Mediterranean communities”

Mr. Martin Dorsman

European Community Shipowners' Associations - Secretary General

The European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA) is a European umbrella organisation representing twenty national shipowners' associations in the European Union, the UK and Norway, founded back in 1965, with the aim to promote and protect the interests of European shipping.

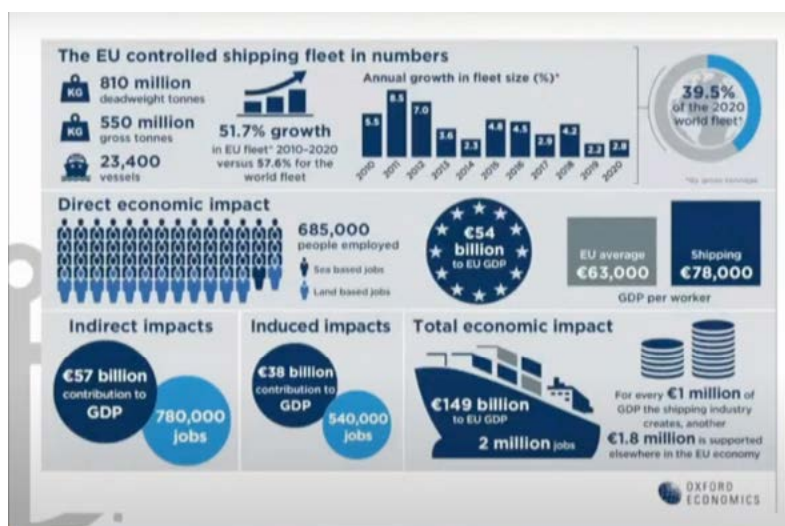
We are based in Brussels and we can count on 11 employees in the Secretariat.

The image shows that European shipowners represent almost 40% of the world fleet, add €149 million to the European economy and are responsible for a total of 2 million jobs.

Transport by sea is a very crucial service, for both the world and the EU: 90% of the world trade is by sea, 76% of the EU external trade is by sea, and, for what concerns intra-EU transports, 32% are by sea. The biggest intra-EU transport mode is road transport (trucks), and that is 50%, but the second one is what we also call “short sea shipping”. In Europe, we transport 190 million passengers by sea. European shipowners control a very diverse fleet that spans from small short-sea ship vessels to big oil tankers, ferries and offshore vessels.

Shipping in the Mediterranean is a cornerstone, a driving force of the Blue Economy of the region, but there are some crucial conditions for the shipping industry in order to retain and even strengthen its positive impacts on the Blue Economy.

It is fair to say that shipping is a stabilising element. By providing maritime services, we invest in the Blue Economy, we make the economy stronger, and stability and security in the Mediterranean sea are therefore key for the shipping industry. Being able to operate safely is also a precondition for shipping to continue to generate



value, thus playing a stabilising role in the Mediterranean geopolitical and economic eco-system.

Nowadays, commercial shipping is of course affected by the migration crisis in the Mediterranean, and there are several elements that can contribute to ease the current situation. We believe that investing in the Blue Economy is crucial to improve the stability of the Mediterranean region and its communities. We therefore encourage the EU to promote its Blue Economy model and to share its best practices in its discussions with Northern and Sub-Saharan African counterparts, investing in infrastructures, resources and skills in this

dimension. This will contribute to the stabilisation of the region and decrease the “pull” factors towards Europe, especially now, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the additional strains it has put on the global economy.

Returning to migration and to search and rescue activities (SAR), it is crucial that the commercial shipping does not become a default option for this kind of tasks. Of course, shipping will continue to assist people in distress at sea, it is a moral and legal obligation. However, the responsibility to assist people in distress and coordinate search and rescue activities should remain with governments.

In this context, ECSA, together with the European Transport Workers’ Federation (ETF), is engaging closely with the European Commission and the Union’s member states to ensure prompt and predictable disembarkation of rescue people in distress in a place of safety. And the words “prompt” and “predictable” are key: it is crucial that the ships rescuing people have the guarantee that they can disembark them quickly and predictably.

Commercial ships are not equipped for large-scale rescue operations, nor to safely house people on board for extended periods of time. Moreover, it must be acknowledged that the crew is not trained for situations of this kind, and the impact of forced and large-scale rescue activities on the team’s mental wellbeing should not be underestimated.

For instance, some years ago, the ERASMUS-GRACHT, a relatively small, Dutch-flagged vessel, picked up almost 400 migrants and fortunately it was able to disembark those people within two days. But we also had the case of the Maersk Tankers vessel Etienne, a few months ago, that rescued 27 migrants, who then stayed on board for the next 38 days: a very difficult situation, not only for the people who were rescued, but also for the crew.

Once again, safe and secure shipping operations in the Mediterranean sea are a vital part of the regional Blue Economy and can be a stabilising force, but that what happen to the Maersk Tankers vessel should not happen

again. However, the geopolitical and economic situation in the area remains problematic, and it is likely to be exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19 on local economies.

As already mentioned, ECSA is working closely with European institutions to make sure the industry’s concerns are heard at the highest political level. But what can we do more, together?

Later today, a working group will address the possibility to create situational awareness between actors in the Mediterranean basin, to establish practical cooperation and information coordination between them, and the possibility to create a Centre for Maritime Security will also be discussed.

Sharing intelligence between all actors can be very effective and it should be further explored how it could contribute the situation in the Mediterranean. We know it from other EU operations, as EU Operation Atalanta, combating piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Somali waters. But another key condition is that an effective follow-up can be given, in case the type of information requires it. Capacities, scale and flexibility are needed for every successful operation.

Coming to the conclusions, in its recent announcement, the EU Commission mentioned the idea of setting up a European Contact Group on Search and Rescue: the aims of the group are to stimulate information exchange and cooperation between European member states, as well as to identify good practices. In this regard, I should say that we, as the European shipping industry, would have liked a better text on migration and the position of merchant vessels in the Pact on Migration. The text, with respect to migration, only mentions NGOs vessels, and we are asking the Commission for a better guidance to European Member States concerning the position of merchant vessels performing large scale Search and Rescue activities. At the same time, though, we are also of course willing to contribute to the initiatives mentioned by the Commission in the recent communications.

“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean after the global pandemic”

Panel Two: “The development of the blue economy of the Mediterranean is an inestimable possibility to solve many of the challenges and to improve the livelihood of the Mediterranean communities”

Mr. Luca Sisto

Confitarma - Confederazione Italiana Armatori, Director General

I am honoured to represent the Italian maritime industry in this international conference, which is a huge opportunity to discuss the most challenging developments for the future of our common maritime domain. Let me start with the title of this gripping panel, the development of the blue economy of the Mediterranean. Today, we have an incredible opportunity to discuss how to solve many of the challenges that affect the Mediterranean Sea and to improve the livelihood of the communities that belong to it. The Italian Shipping Association is firmly convinced of this point. In fact, behind every shipping line, there is not only the development of the economy but also the development of dialogue, ideas and knowledge that can only boost the improvement of socio-economic conditions of the Mediterranean communities.

In this respect, cooperation and sharing of information between military and civilian stakeholders to increase the level of maritime security awareness, is crucial to ensure the freedom of the seas and the free flow of maritime traffics. It is particularly true when it comes to this period of global pandemic, with the consequences that we are all experiencing. The global pandemic has indeed demonstrated that shipping is the lifeblood of the worldwide economy. As you all know, about 90% of world trade is carried by sea, and the ship is the first vital link in this supply chain. Therefore, without shipping intercontinental trade, the bulk transport of raw materials, the import/export of affordable food and medical goods would not be possible.

As far as the Italian shipping industry is concerned, the first half of 2020, the one characterised by the lockdown, saw an average contraction of 12% in terms of tonnage of goods transited by the Italian ports, with data ranging from 9% of Ro/Ro traffic to 23% of solid bulk. However, the shipping industry has never stopped to work since the outbreak of the pandemic. For this reason, the Italian government has expressly confirmed that maritime transport is an essential service for the country. I cannot

avoid mentioning that COVID-19 pandemic has also had considerable impacts on seafarers. They played a key role during the emergency, keeping the global supply chain moving on. However, travel restrictions imposed by some governments around the world have created many problems to crew changes and the repatriation of seafarers, leading to a serious humanitarian crisis.

Coming back to the main topic of the panel, we must always bear in mind that the Mediterranean is the sea where our country has its national and geopolitical interests and where our fleet and our shipping industry generate our economy. The Mediterranean represents only one per cent of the global water surface, but it accounts for the 20% of the overall maritime traffic. In Italy, 57% of imports and 44% of exports are carried by sea. That is why making *Mare Nostrum* a safe space, but also more competitive is essential to protect our national interests. Indeed, maritime security and the blue economy are strictly connected. For many years, the Confederazione Italiana Armatori (Confitarma) has been following carefully the issues related to maritime security, from the adoption of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code to the new rise of maritime piracy, from the migration crisis in the Mediterranean to the cyber security threats. In this regard, it is crucial to remember that return of maritime piracy is a trend which for years now has represented a serious risk to the global maritime trade. The partnership between institutions and industries to elaborate counter-piracy measures in the Indian Ocean, was a success. However, piracy remains a threat in this part of the world. In West Africa, the situation is even more critical. This is an area of strategic importance for the Italian energy policy and in which our shipping industry has vital commercial interests.

It seems that the impact of COVID-19 has been very limited in relation to security in the maritime environment, but the economic impact of containment measures could further increase poverty rates and income inequalities in these areas, triggering violence and dis-

order. In this respect, we must always bear in mind that an unsafe sea could affect the development of our communities and economic systems. In this regard, on behalf of the Italian shipping industry let me thank the Italian Navy; without our Navy our vessels and crew would be exposed to high risks with a tremendous impact on the economy of our country. Since the main goal of these important meetings is to improve our common maritime situational awareness, allow me once again to bring to your attention an important issue that involves Italian shipowners and on which Confitarma urgently need clarity.

As you all know, during these last years the shipping industry has faced many challenges associated with Search and Rescue operations in the central Mediterranean, and the spread of the pandemic in the region has made the situation even more difficult. Libya is a source of concern for the Italian shipping industry. As is well-known, we never pulled back from our duties and we will continue to honour them, rescuing human beings at sea.

We are aware of the complexity of this migration crisis in the Mediterranean scenario, but the recent cases of involvement of commercial vessels in Search and Rescue operations created great concern. Firstly, because crews of commercial vessels do not have the necessary equipment on board and do not have the requested training to carry out these operations. Secondly, we have been witnessing the exclusion of the Italian flag from some international tenders in the Mediterranean. For these reasons, in February 2019 Confitarma submitted some questions to the Italian government to receive operational guidelines for our masters when called to intervene in Search and Rescue operation. As of now, we have not received any feedback yet. The Italian shipping industry will continue to cooperate with all the institutions involved to build a common path that could ensure the safety and security of shipping, thus letting Italy to pursue its maritime interests. As I said before, maritime security and blue economy are strictly connected. Indeed,

let me underline that maritime security is essential to support the blue economy development, and therefore sustainable development.

Our fleet is young and technologically advanced, almost 50% is less than ten years old. Italian shipowners heavily invest in environmental sustainability and the safety of their fleet. Despite a massive increase in global maritime trade, there has been a high reduction in marine pollution by ships. The Italian shipowners are strongly committed to global initiatives for sustaining a substantial CO₂ emissions reduction. We have started to use energy resources with zero emissions, exactly ten days ago the first example of a new series of hybrid Ro/Ro vessels which will use fossil fuel during navigation and electricity while in port, entered into service in the Mediterranean. Indeed, from the 1st of January 2020, the International Maritime Organisation has enforced a new 0.5% Global Sulphur Cap on fuel content, lowering the current limit by seven times. To comply with this new regulation, some shipowners installed scrubbers. The other alternative is using LNG-powered vessels (Liquified Natural Gas).

Since the end of 2018 one of our member companies put into service the first LNG ferry in the Mediterranean. Also, some LNG-powered ships are already operating in the cruise sector. Unfortunately, not now because of the pandemic, and more of them are being built. Sadly, due to the lack of regulation, it is not possible yet to refuel LNG-powered vessels in the Italian ports. I think that this is unbelievable.

Let me conclude by saying that the feeling is that nothing will be as if it was before the pandemic, but shipping remains a better global link for the development of sustainable international trade. For this reason, we firmly believe that Navies and Merchant Marines should move forward together to improve mutual understanding and collaboration at sea. Only in this way, we will be able to overcome the current crisis and ensure the full development of the blue economy in the Mediterranean Sea to the benefit of all the communities that surround it.

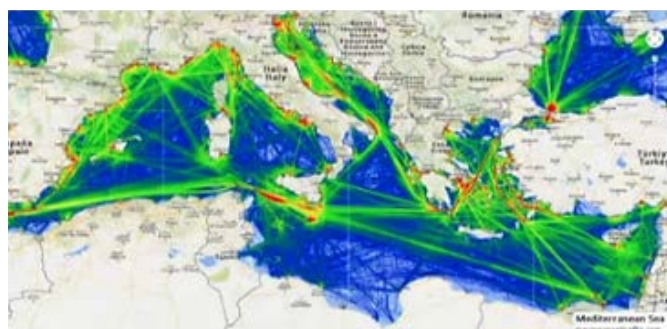
“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean after the global pandemic”

Panel Two: “The development of the blue economy of the Mediterranean is an inestimable possibility to solve many of the challenges and to improve the livelihood of the Mediterranean communities”

R.Adm. (Ret.) ITN Fabio Caffio
International Law of sea expert

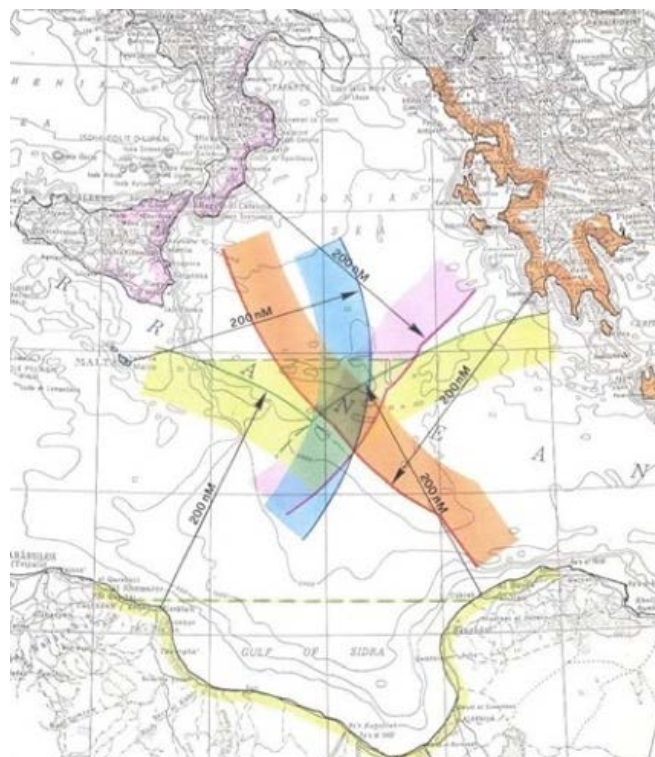
The Mediterranean Sea is an international trades hub. The pandemic crisis does not seem to have had a deep impact on the Mediterranean in terms of ships passing through it. No Mediterranean port has never been closed, even if quarantine measures have been adopted for crews, cruise passengers or migrants.

The Mediterranean, despite covering less than 1% of the world's oceans surface, accounts for around 15% of the global maritime traffic.



Mediterranean Sea ship traffic live map
Density Map (as for NOV. 25)
Source: Marine Vessel Traffic.

Concerning its status, the Mediterranean is a *unicum* to be seen in relations with the adjacent basins, through its international SLOC's, the Gibraltar Strait and the Suez Canal. The applicable geopolitical concept is the Wider Mediterranean; from the maritime point of view, the Mediterranean is an international waterway: in other words, a transit sea. The legal trend underway is to territorialize a large area of open sea. The fact is that the distance between opposite coasts in the Mediterranean is everywhere less than 400 miles; so, each State has to enter into negotiations with the others since unilateral decisions are not allowed. Many states claimed Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off their coasts, but, as there's not enough space to unilateral delimitations, they created several overlapping area.



Overlapping area of theoretical 200 miles
Mediterranean EEZ (Source: Francalanci,
Maridografico Genova)

The value of the Mediterranean as an international waterway is based upon the freedom of navigation principle. Maintaining the freedom of navigation is an historic task of the navies in time of peace, but the unimpeded use of the Mediterranean SLOC requires navies to ensure the legality of the maritime domain. Warships are States organs, so entitled, under the UNCLOS², to carry out the function of policing the high-seas. I would quote, at this regard, Admiral Robert Mahan, the famous strategist, when said that navies, especially in time of peace, are «factors of utmost important in international affairs, often more deterrent than irritant»³. Finally, we have to consider that freedom of navigation applies also in the EEZs and not only in the high-seas. This is very important since the Mediterranean Sea is under territorialisation.

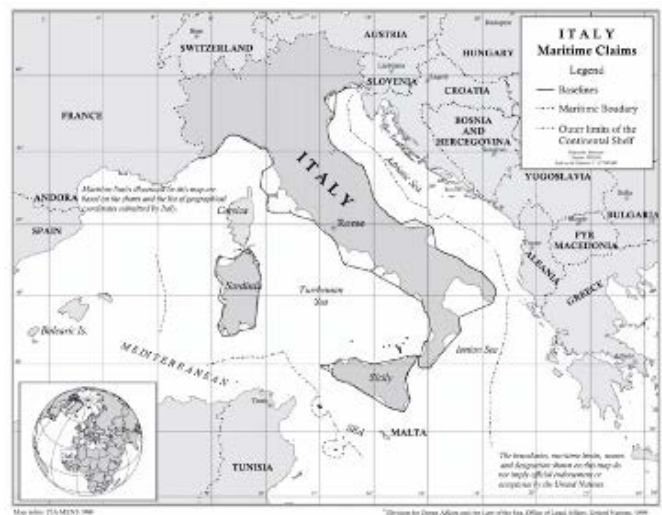
1 Sea lines of communication.

2 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 10 December 1982, Montego Bay

3 A. T. Mahan, The Interest of America in Sea power, Present and Future, Boston, 1898, pp. 171-172.

A pillar of the stability of the Mediterranean is the *European Union Maritime Security Strategy* (EUMSS), approved in 2014⁴. Its key points are: 1) Non-military functions carried out by navies in preserving the freedom of navigation and fighting illicit activities; 2) Delimitation of maritime zones, such as the Exclusive Economic Zone, which present a potential for growth and jobs; 3) Peaceful settlement of maritime disputes in accordance with the international law of sea; 4) Strengthening security of the maritime domain by the *Common Security and Defense Policy*. Concerning the delimitation of Mediterranean maritime zones, let me underline that, since no geographical conditions exist for unilateral declarations of EEZ, concerned States have to enter in negotiations under UNCLOS principles, taking in account that equidistance isn't a dogma, but starting method to achieve an «equitable solutions». At this regard I would like to remember that Italy agreed the boundaries of its continental shelf with former Yugoslavia (1968), Tunisia (1971), Spain (1974), Greece (1977), Albania (1992). My Country agreed also a provisional Modus Vivendi with Malta (1970) related to a median line between the opposite coasts comprised in the 200 mt. bathymetry, reaching eastward, as terminal point, the meridian 15°10'. Worthy of mention is the fact that, while full effect has been attributed to the island of Sardinia in the agreement with Spain, the same it is not true for other Italian islands involved in the delimitation with Tunisia: this happened in particular in the framework of the Italo-Tunisian 1971 Agreement which recognized to the Island of Pantelleria one mile of continental shelf beyond its territorial waters. In the same manner, the Italo-Hellenic 1977 Agreement (whose frontier has been confirmed for the EEZ in 2020) gave a reduced effect to the relevant Greek islands.

The vision of the EUMSS focused on security and



Source: UN DOALOS

stability is at the base of the mandate of EUNAVFOR MED Operation “Irinì”⁵ whose main aspects are 1) Implementing the UN arms embargo off the coasts of Libya in full support of the International Peace Process aimed at maintain the independence and integrity of the country; 2) Impartiality towards the warring parties in Libya; 3) Possibility to carry out inspections of vessels on the high-seas suspected to be engaged in violation of UNSCR 2292 (2016)⁶ under condition that intervening state made “good-faith efforts to first seek the consent of the vessel’s flag state prior to any inspections aimed to respect the national jurisdiction”.

At this regard it must underlined that, for the first time in the history of the UN Security Council, some Members⁷ expressed their veto against a naval embargo of coercive nature applicable *erga omnes* without consent. However, the new consensual regime is mitigated by the fact that the flag States, in accordance with the para 3 of same UNSCR, are obliged to cooperate in good faith with the intervening State. In this framework must be seen the standard practice of four hours’ time limit period default rule⁸ adopted by Operation

4 Text in <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11205-2014-INIT/EN/pdf>

5 See <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/03/31/eu-launches-operation-irini-to-enforce-libya-arms-embargo/#>

6 Text in <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/174/94/PDF/N1617494.pdf?OpenElement>

7 It must be remembered that seeking flag state consent before interdiction was a difficult aspect of the negotiations of the UNSCR 2292 (2016): «It seems that for China and Russia not requesting flag state consent would be against the general principle of exclusive jurisdiction of a flag state over its vessels on the high seas, as well as against the principle of freedom of navigation. However, given that attaining the cooperation of flag states can at times be difficult and that there are concerns about the timeliness and effectiveness of interdictions in this context, several Council members pushed not to require consent by the flag state. In the end, the draft that will be put to a vote includes a reference to making good-faith efforts to first seek the consent of the vessel’s flag state prior to any inspections» (<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2016/06/vote-on-a-resolution-on-maritime-interdiction-to-implement-the-arms-embargo-on-libya.php>)

8 See the case of the German Frigate that boarded without consent a Turkish cargo suspected of taking weapons to Libya illegally (“Germany angers Turkey with attempt to police Libya arms embargo”, Reuters, Nov 23 2020, in



Irini applying analogically the art. 8 bis of SUA London Protocol 2005⁹. In the future, as an alternative to the visit and search, in order to avoid the boarding at sea of a vessel suspect to be engaged in violation of an embargo regime, flag States could adopt the system of “Navicert”¹⁰, certificates (under condition to be recognized by EU) granting that the ship is not carrying prohibited goods¹¹.

In conclusion, the free flow of maritime trade in the Mediterranean Sea requires a secure environment. Protecting the legality of the maritime domain is the main task of the mission performed in disrupting arms, oil and migrants smuggling, by Operation Irini, in accordance with the principles and values of the European Union, in the interest of both the international community and the Libyan people.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-turkey-germany/germany-angers-turkey-with-attempt-to-police-libya-arms-embargo-idUSKBN-28315K>.

⁹ Text in <https://www.congress.gov/110/cdoc/tdoc8/CDOC-110tdoc8.pdf>

¹⁰ See San Remo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflicts at Sea, IIHL, CUP, 1995, 200

¹¹ The question must be seen in the context of the difficulties to visit a vessel at sea in case of inaccessible cargo that could impose its diversion in a port.



“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean after the global pandemic”

Panel Two: “The development of the blue economy of the Mediterranean is an inestimable possibility to solve many of the challenges and to improve the livelihood of the Mediterranean communities”

Amb. Stefano Sannino

Deputy Secretary General for Economic and Global Issues, EEAS

The Euro-Mediterranean relations have been traditionally marked by the geographic proximity, interdependence and numerous interests and challenges that the two regions share. The Mediterranean Sea accounts only for one per cent of the world's oceans yet generate twenty per cent of the related economic value, and that makes it a global and fundamental economic crossroads. Moreover, people to people contact between the two shores of the Mediterranean have been traditionally always considerable, and yet this is one of the less integrated regions in the world.

Between the two shores of the Mediterranean exist some of the widest economic despairing among neighbouring countries and regions globally. It is enough to say that the wealth generated by each member of the population in the South is thirteen times lower than in the North. The impact of COVID-19 has worsened this *ratio*. The pandemic is hitting very hard the economies of the Mediterranean. The major socio-economic shock caused by COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the numerous pre-existing social, economic and institutional vulnerabilities. Fragile economies have been further weakened, and we witnessed an increase of political and social tensions. Socio-economic reforms have become necessary now more than ever.

The EU has rapidly demonstrated its solidarity and has put together a short-term collective response to the crisis. EU institutions and member states mobilised support for over 2.2 billion euros, focusing on health, economic and social sectors. This is not fresh money, it is an adjust of the ongoing assistance programme that was already there. However, it has shown the capacity to react quickly to the needs. It is worth recalling that the southern Mediterranean is a region where the European Union has consistently invested both politically and financially over the last ten years. EU cooperation in the southern Mediterranean covers a wide range of sectors, bilateral and regional cross borders under the overall framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy with

the considerable support of the European Neighbourhood Instrument which has mobilised almost 8 billion euros for the period from 2014 to 2020.

When considering COVID-19 pandemic, the challenge that we have in front of us is how to help countries severely hit by the crisis to recover from the socio-economic emergency. From that perspective, a green recovery is a *conditio sine qua non* to achieve this objective. We have the opportunity to build an enduring economic recovery, from countering the impact of the pandemic to fighting the effect of global warming in the region. In this regard, sustainable blue economy is an example of a more resilient economy. Climate change and environmental degradation have become a global emergency, especially in the Mediterranean region. According to some models, the Mediterranean region will be 2.2 degrees warmer by 2040, and such a negative trend will act as a threat multiplier exacerbating political, social, economic and security challenges. That is why implementing the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and the Paris Agreement remains vital to be better equipped for future economic shocks.

It is to be said that there is no trade-off between economic growth and environment. On the contrary, building resilience, and at the same time creating jobs and growth, while mitigating impacts and adapting to climate change, means attracting investments that can be mobilised in key green sectors such as renewable energies, low-carbon transition, electrification or hydrogen. We must take into account that the EU is the region's first economic and trade partner. Given this, the geographic proximity and the interdependence between the two shores, it is easy to say that we have a joint interest in further strengthening our economic cooperation.

Based on the lessons learned from the pandemic, another crucial aspect is represented by the importance of creating diversified short value-chains in view of a sustainable economic recovery as well as the importance of cooperation in the fields of health innovation and re-

search, with the aim of improving the livelihood of our citizens. This is the reason why it is important to continue on the path of the necessary political and socio-economic reforms in creating the right conditions for attracting investments in the region, starting with good governance and rule of law. We must tackle first the main problems for the future of the region, such as youth unemployment or migration. It is a global challenge which is closely linked to the underlying socio-economic conditions. Well-managed migration and mobility of people could offer substantial benefits for all, for complicated destinations and transits as well as for migrants themselves.

On the 23rd of September, the European Commission proposed a new pact on migration and asylum, based on the concept of managing migrations. Discussions among the member states have started, but they are difficult, and there is still a lot of work to do to reach a shared vision and a course of action. I do not want to go into the details of these negotiations, but let me stress that it is crucial to bear this dimension in mind, and it is also vital to work to have a positive impact of migration on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Finally, our region cannot prosper without stability, security, peace and good neighbourly relations. Improving and delivering on security is an essential prerequisite for achieving long-lasting resilience for countries and their societies. To this end, the European Union follows a comprehensive approach which focuses on conflict prevention, counter-terrorism, fight against radicalisation and security sector reform. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission Josep Borrell has

painstakingly referred to the EU work in the region to support UN efforts, particularly in Libya, to make effective use of the EU instruments in an integrated way. I want to conclude by highlighting the importance of regional cooperation. A profound reflection on how to renew our partnership with the southern neighbours started last May, and it is ongoing.

We are preparing a joint communication on the renovated cooperation with the southern neighbourhood that we should approve at the beginning of 2021. As we are speaking, a ministerial meeting is taking place between the EU and our southern partners in Barcelona. This meeting has been organised back to back with the fifth annual regional forum of the Union of the Mediterranean, which is gathering in Barcelona also the ministers of foreign affairs of the forty-two member countries. It is also the occasion for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of Barcelona Process. Among the objectives of declaration, which is under negotiations, there is a commitment to a sustainable blue economy, with a particular focus on the field of marine and maritime governance, the fight against pollution and protection of biodiversity.

The Union for the Mediterranean has been already working on these topics for a long time. On the 2nd of February 2021, in Malta, there will be the second ministerial on the blue economy of the Union for the Mediterranean. This is certainly a challenging time but it is also a time of opportunities to create a new social, economic and political environment in the Mediterranean. This is what we are aiming to, and this is the focus on which we need to concentrate our efforts.

“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean after the global pandemic”

Panel Two: “The development of the blue economy of the Mediterranean is an inestimable possibility to solve many of the challenges and to improve the livelihood of the Mediterranean communities”

Ms. Rita Del Prete

Euronews Italy – Head of Italian service

In my intervention, I would like to stress the situation of media in the Mediterranean region. In this area there is a multitude of outlets that report news from the Mediterranean and at the 24-hour service, where I work, we receive at least once a day news coming from the region. Our 24-hour channel has to be faster than the competitors. However, the most important issue is not the coverage but the cherry picking of the news.

We live in an infodemic era which means we are stressed by an excessive amount of information about a given problem that makes it difficult to find solutions. Besides, another peculiarity of today's media system is the weaponisation of the news. I will give you some examples.

Libya is probably the country with the higher density of social networks in the world; the 90% of the population in the country has a smartphone. In Libya battles also rage on social media; fighters often have in one hand a gun, in the other a smartphone, and they use their camera in propaganda wars. Facebook has become the main online battleground where opposite sides post images or videos real or fake, it does not matter. Photos of wounded or dead fighters are immediately posted to prove supremacy in the battlefield.

Today is certain that both sides of the Libyan conflict have weaponised the media to promote their narrative. In my point of view, this will have consequences in the years to come. Of course, disinformation is not the main issue in Libya. Disinformation represents an international problem that is capable of affecting us all.

Let's take France as an example. Few months ago we have assisted to an issue between Islam and secularism. President Macron speech on secularism in defence of the cartoons published by *Charlie Hebdo* was weaponised by Erdogan who called upon the whole Muslim community to boycott French products. This called reached even

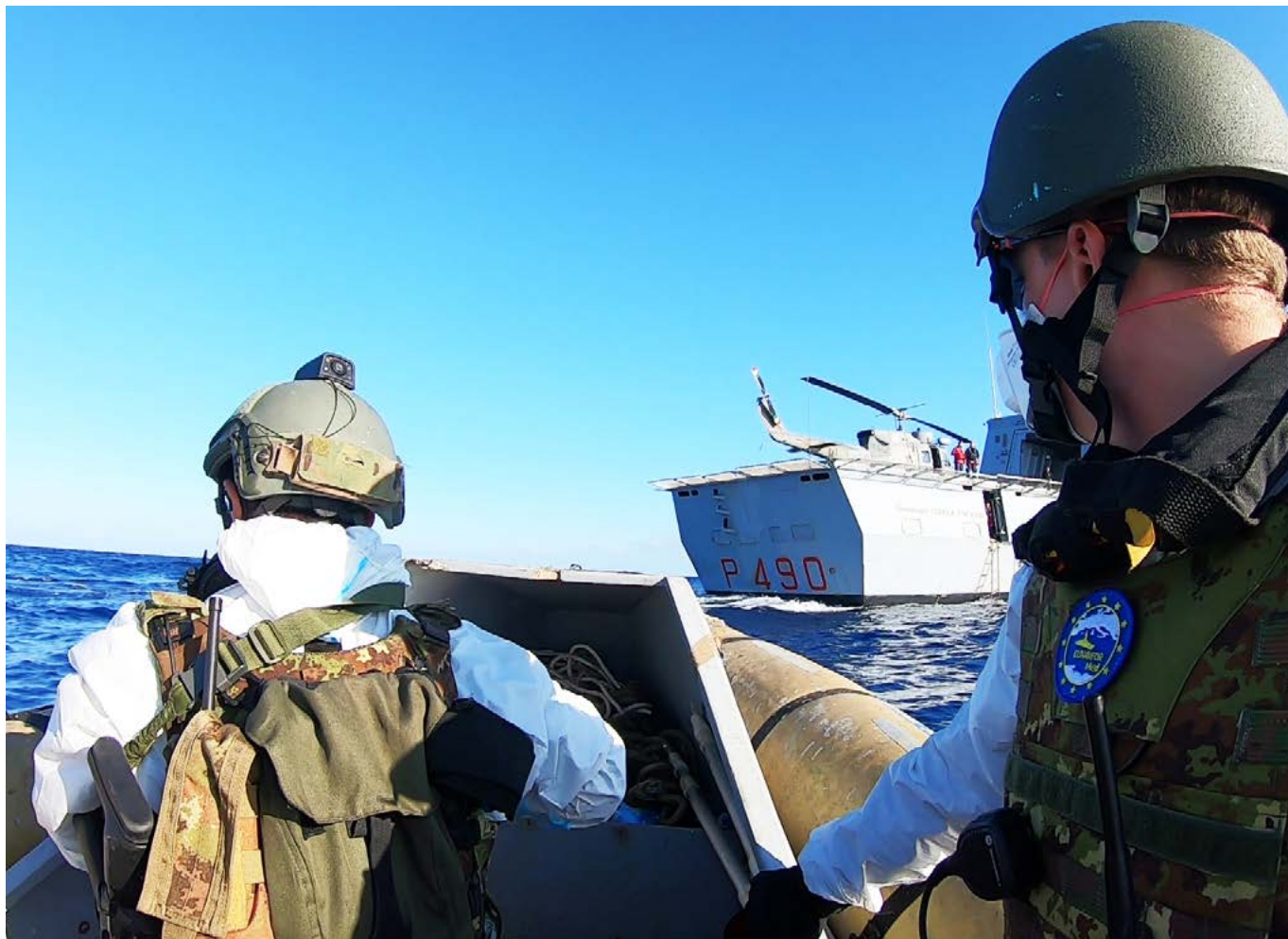
Pakistan. I doubt that Pakistani people buy champagne or camembert, but Muslim people followed the boycott and spread the information on social media. Aljazeera TV called Macron speech “France's weaponisation of *laïcité* to discriminate against Muslims”¹.

As you may see, the speed of the message's spread and fast reactions to it could easily lead to the distortion of the information. The distortion is not important; *de facto* there is a trench war of messaging among international actors. They use this trench war of messages as a proxy war, as recently happened in Nagorno-Karabakh or in the MED where Russia and Turkey are fighting a proxy war. Russia is coming back on this international scene with its navy located in Tartus, in Syria. The port is officially classified as a *material and technical support* point and not as a base.

Turkey's agreement with Libya last November brings the north African coast closer to Anatolia. This political rapprochement with Tripoli consolidates Ankara's aims on Libya offshore oil fields. If I can say, proxy war and trench war on messages go hand by hand in the Mediterranean region, already brutally hit by the tensions among Sunni and Shiite Muslims.

This fragile context is a fertile ground for news weaponisation. Therefore, media have to concentrate their action more on debunking fake news and control the speed of information spreading which can be in the years to come a threat for our democracies.

1 “Islam” is not in crisis, liberalism is, Asd Dandia, ALJAZEERA, 7 November 2020



“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean After the global pandemic”

Ms. Stephanie Turco Williams
UNSMIL Mission Head

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has made substantial progress in the search for peace and stability in Libya, particularly during the past few months. A ceasefire agreement was signed in Geneva on the 23rd of October and started immediately to come into effect. As the truce on the ground continues to hold, the ceasefire consolidated many confidence-building measures that have had a real impact on the ground and it responded to the Secretary General’s call for a global ceasefire related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following the Geneva agreement, I joined both delegations of the 5+5 Libyan-led Joint Military Commission (JMC) in Ghadames, in southern Libya, from the 2nd to the 4th of November, as they endorsed the terms of a Libyan-led and UN-supported ceasefire monitoring mechanism to be initially established in central Libya with its headquarters to be in Sirte. The UNSMIL team also joined the 5+5 Commission in Sirte between from the 10th to the 13th of November.

Key outcomes of both meetings included: a plan to reopen the coastal road from Misrata to Sirte; moves to deploy a Libyan joint security force to the “buffer zone”, as well as the withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries from the area; the establishment of the JMC headquarters in the Ouagadougou Conference Centre in Sirte; the operationalisation of the sub-committees under the umbrella of the 5+5; the continuation of detainees’ exchanges and a full resumption of oil production and domestic flights throughout the country.

On the 16th of October, I joined a meeting with the Chairman of the National Oil Corporation (NOC) and the Eastern and Western Commanders of the Petroleum Facilities Guards (the PFG) in Brega, the birthplace of oil in Libya, to discuss the unification and restructuring of this protection force. The Commanders of the PFG presented their proposal for a new force’s structure and I urged them to capitalise on the current momentum while adapting an incremental approach.

On the 9th of November, I convened the first in-person session of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum in Tunis, on the basis of the Berlin Conference’s conclusions, endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2510. The dialogue concluded on the 15th of November, with participants adopting the political roadmap to Presidential and Parliamentary elections to be held on the 24th of December 2021, including the establishment of a legal committee to agree on constitutional arrangements for the *interim* phase.

The Libyans have achieved many positive steps on all fronts of the intra-Libyan tracks: political, military and economic. But the situation in the country remains extremely fragile and volatile. There is no time for complacency, and limiting external negative interferences in Libya through material, financial or political supported spoilers is a key element of the political course that members charted in Berlin. This is the reason why, during my last Security Council briefing, I appealed to all stakeholders, including to those who provide security on the ground, to engage in fostering an environment of trust, so that all *strata* of the society, specifically women, youth and internally displaced persons, can fully exercise their franchise in the upcoming elections.

While the Joint Military Commission seeks to operationalise this ceasefire agreement, the two sides have not yet begun to withdraw their forces. The Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan Arab Armed Forces remain stationed at their positions. In addition, after the ceasefire agreement was signed, military cargo flights continued to set up fortifications and military outposts, equipped with air defence systems between Sirte and Al-Jufra.

I have urged the UN Security Council to support this historic moment by ensuring enforcement of relevant resolutions pertaining to the arms embargo. Violations of the arms embargo must stop to prevent spoilers or any foreign interference from jeopardising efforts made by Libyan parties to reach and to hold the ceasefire.

Operation IRINI continues to play a critical role in this sensitive phase of Libya's history, implementing the Security Council's mandate and monitoring violation of the arms embargo. The efforts of IRINI will definitely reinforce UNSMIL's own efforts to facilitate a return to legitimacy and national sovereignty through a political solution.

This year, more than 11.000 migrants and refugees trying to reach Europe have been intercepted at sea and returned to Libya, which is, by all definitions, not a safe port for return. The numbers already far surpass the total for 2019. Hundreds have paid the ultimate price, with more than 900 migrants and refugees drowning or presumed drowned in the Mediterranean in 2020. On the 12th of November, three deadly shipwrecks, recorded in one day, claimed over 100 lives. Migrants and refugees remaining in Libya have faced an upsurge in grave protection risks and violations of their human rights. As of the 8th of November, more than 2.000 migrants and refugees are in official detention centres in Libya.

SHADE MED's mandate to de-conflict and, where possible, coordinate military and civilian resources, military and civilian operations and industry, remains critical to saving thousands of lives and disrupting the network of human trafficking that is the key revenue for illegal armed groups and criminal organisations operating in Western Libya.

The number of COVID-19 cases and deaths in Libya continues to increase month on month. The first two weeks of November saw a 22% increase in the number of COVID-19 cases, with Libya's biggest cities, Tripoli, Benghazi and Misrata, witnessing the largest increases. With limited testing capacities and poor mortality surveillance, the numbers are a fraction of what health experts suspect to be the true scale of the problem.

Despite all this, I remain optimistic about the way forward in Libya, and yet clear-eyed about the many challenges that lay ahead. Ten years of war cannot be solved in one week of political talks, but we hear more now the language of peace, rather than the language of war. I have witnessed in the past several months the potential for a paradigm shift and how Libyan military, political and economic leaders view their role in charting the country's path forward. From one of a transactional power-sharing arrangement, in which the riches are divided up among a privileged few, to one of sharing responsibilities in order to save the country from further conflict. Only shared responsibilities, nurtured by patriotism and the love of country, can lead to the shared security and prosperity for which so many Libyans yearn. Libyans deserve the support, but not the interference, by the many international actors, as they seek to forge a sovereign political future.

“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean After the global pandemic”

Major General Giovanni Maria Iannucci

Policy Director, Italian Defence General Staff on behalf

of Gen. Enzo Vecciarelli (Chief of Italian Defence General Staff)

It is both personal and professional pleasure to give you a brief introduction of how Italy view the Mediterranean region and have the chance, at the same time, to streamline and point out how Italy should pay attention to the Mediterranean.

As the Policy Director, I had several opportunities to talk about the Mediterranean region and to talk about the South in general as well as the growing interests, challenges and threats that affect the Mediterranean Sea. In my opinion, SHADE MED is of paramount importance for all the stakeholders involved today, and for Italy as a whole. It is a unique forum precisely; it gathered not only state and non-state actors but also civilian and military institutions, private companies as well as whoever is seriously interested in the Mediterranean Sea to share his point of view. SHADE MED is a tremendous opportunity where to share ideas and proposals freely. If I am not mistaken, the event is in its fifth edition, and after all this time, it has always managed to renew itself and maintain its focus on many issues central to the Mediterranean.

The high-level speakers present both in-presence and virtually prove the vital role that the Mediterranean plays for our community. My expectation for this forum is, of course, to collect some proposals and ideas in order to enhance our ability to streamline the Mediterranean system itself. I believe, and also the institution that I represent, that we have a unique opportunity to debate about the security of the Mediterranean and to share ideas for strengthening it and creating a safer space, and I want to stress that it is in our interest to do this. In addition, I want to congratulate with the organisers not only for the format but also for the choice of topics that helps us widening our discussion.

I want to start outlining the Italian role in the Mediterranean, how we see this strategic area, what we are doing, and what we consider it is worth to be done. Let me start recalling that the Mediterranean is not

only the centre of our strategic landscape, but also our top priority in terms of geopolitical projection. The so-called *Mare Nostrum*, the Mediterranean Sea, is where we live. For this reason, I think nothing is more important than this for us. On the contrary, the international community is not showing the attention it deserves, according to the Italian point of view. It is particularly true for the new phenomena that are arising from this area and the South in general. Having said that, I want to thank again IRINI's personnel and its Commander, Rear Admiral Fabio Agostini, for their efforts in organising this forum of utmost importance, especially in these times of uncertainty for the region.

Without considering its military aim, operations IRINI remains central for Italy to create connections between different stakeholders in the region. We believe that IRINI is a kind of cross-cultural tool that enables the dialogue among different actors in this area, making them able to talk and understand each other's while coordinating their actions. I want to recall what I was mentioning a few moments ago about the international institutions and the fact that they do not seem to pay enough attention to the South and phenomena affecting the region. Of course, I am referring in particular to terrorism, illegal migration, and general instability that hit the region and the Mediterranean in general, and have a tremendous impact on our security.

In this problematic context, Operation IRINI plays a key role, tackling the smuggling of goods and trafficking of human beings, and also creating conditions for a safer and more secure environment. As an Italian representative of Defense, let me point out that the location of IRINI Headquarters in Rome is not only a tangible sign of our country's commitment and attention towards the Mediterranean itself but also towards a European mission protecting and securing the rule of law and the freedom of navigation in the

Mediterranean that are unquestionable principles to be protected. *What is this context in terms of geostrategic approach? How do we see the Mediterranean from a geopolitical point of view?*

The Mediterranean amounts approximately to only one per cent of the water surface. However, its role is of higher importance, as you perfectly know, and it goes beyond this limited percentage. The Mediterranean Sea is the connective tissue between different systems, different communities and different interests. It is undeniable that a significant number of crises arises from the Mediterranean basin: the Daesh threat, Libya's instability, the Syrian civil war, Lebanon's fragility, foreign terrorist fighters return, Western Balkans' instability, the migration crisis and much more is at stake. I started to expose what we consider just the tip of the iceberg. Each of those threats that affect the security of our community arises from the south shore of the Mediterranean. Nowadays, the Mediterranean Sea conundrum is composed of different and complex geopolitical challenges. It is an area that represents a historical crossroads of three faiths, with due consequences, an area of tremendous importance for migrants and energy routes, that exacerbate tensions, and a place where natural resources, mostly gas, are pivotal elements in the relations among countries.

The Mediterranean region is an area where all the states that belong to it, even fragile or failed ones, play their own game. This adds complexity to a system where conflicting agendas put the security of the region at risk. Given these premises, it is evident that the only way we have to enhance the security of MED systems, providing an improvement to the safety of the entire Mediterranean community, is through open dialogue among countries, sharing best practices and information to solve these issues within the international law frame, through negotiations and diplomatic tools.

I am proud to say that Italy is hugely committed to support this approach. The Mediterranean region represents from thirty to thirty-five per cent of the Italian military efforts, and we will probably see an increase in the years to come. If we think about the Mediterranean, we must take into account that the area is surrounded by 22 countries. This gives instantly the idea of how much complex is to find a shared view for all those countries on how to handle this important

crossroads of three continents such as Africa, Asia and Europe. In addition, it is necessary to recall that the demographic imbalance South - North will represent one of the long-term strategic problems in the Mediterranean region, partially generated by missed access to a satisfactory lifestyle by a wider part of the southern population. The Mediterranean is the principal maritime gateway between East and West. Crossing it from north to south, we can see a combination of different landscapes. It is a space embedded between the eastern and western world, including the area between the arctic sea and the Gulf of Guinea. We may have a different idea on how wide we should consider the Mediterranean geographically speaking.

Each time we debate about this, there is an increasing tendency in widening the Mediterranean, not only in a geographical way but also in terms of the strategic and geoeconomics impact of the Mediterranean structure and systems. When considering conflicts that have an impact on Mediterranean security, we must take into account also the Sahelian region. Of particular interest is the triangle that involves Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, and Libya and Tunisia. North Africa and Sub Saharan region are regions of growing instability, and for these reasons, we are trying to advocate for a shared view to prevent or solve the conflicts in the area. We are trying to do this at the EU and NATO level mainly, but also at the UN level. We think that only through dialogue and full regional co-operation, we can provide and strengthen the stability of the area. From the Italian point of view, this is the only way to provide long-term stability for our Mediterranean. I want to add just a few words on the pandemic.

Nowadays, it is impossible to speak about security without considering the impact of the pandemic and its impact on human security. Well, even though I will not enter in many details, I think it is evident that the pandemic hit severely the European continent. We have just a few data on North Africa, some insights from our French friends that they experienced, and are still experiencing, important problems due to the pandemic. The pandemic hit severely also the Middle East region, and so, therefore, there is a combination of phenomena. The Italian point of view on that is that probably COVID is not necessarily producing new strategic phenomena, but it is boosting and speeding

up phenomena that were smouldering under the ashes and are now magnifying the consequences of threats and challenges that were latent. It is pretty clear to us that terrorist groups continued to reorganise even under these conditions, and that terrorism represents the main threat on the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

Despite this, we must recall that climate change is still producing effects, and those effects are impacting countries previously weakened by the pandemic. This combination of factors might provoke in those countries even worst consequences compared to the threats posed by terrorism. I touched a bit on demographic imbalance. In this regard, we must bear in mind that the impact of the pandemic on the demography of the region is related to the number of measures taken to face the breakout. The pandemic also put at risk the way we maintain channels of communication open to protect our population. Many countries closed the borders, physical ones at least, creating problems to maintain close relations and the ability to interact with neighbouring countries. Unfortunately, not all the twenty-two countries that I mentioned before have the same level of access to digitalisation, and therefore the capacity to keep working together, worsening a bit the differences between the two shores of the Mediterranean. This is another reason why I consider this SHADE MED conference so important. Even under the pandemic restrictions, it is allowing continuing discussing the importance of the Mediterranean region for our security.

It is evident that in this context there is an increased risk that state and non-state actors could exploit the situation to gain strategic influence in the area. In this regard, I want to stress that only through cooperation and mutual understanding we may find a solution. Also, I want to give you a third angle from where to see the Mediterranean and I want to take into account the strategic competition in the area. I mentioned the Libyan conflict, and of course, I am not here to give any specific view on that. Let me say that instability, due to the internal conflict, and its consequences are hitting severely, both Libya and its population. This represents the biggest concern in our view. Moreover, in the Eastern Med, we can see disputes for the energy resources that may create the conditions to increase

tensions. There are concerns because sophisticated defence systems and weapons are available even for non-state actors that are active in the Mediterranean area or close to it, impacting heavily on our security. We continue to monitor the situation. There are a lot of worries about the increasing number of conflicts in that part of the Mediterranean. I previously said that the Mediterranean is a crossroads between east and west, and also between north and south. It is an open space by definition, although not one of the biggest, it is one of the most important water surface for us. It is at the centre of what we consider one of the most critical strategic competition, and there is an increase in the number of actors involved, not necessarily coming from the Mediterranean Sea, trying to gain influence in the Mediterranean region.

Many of them try to reshape the balance of the area by using a mix of tools and measures. Among them, there are assertiveness, military, or economic measures, but most of the time they play in the so-called grey zone where the international law is a little bit less clear in its applicability. The overlapping interest, therefore, of multiple actors, and even the brutality of their actions, may blur the lines producing an increased complexity in this system. I think we have a growing problem in this regard. On these bases, what is the role for defence? Of course, I am delivering my speech as a General on behalf of the Italian Defence General Staff. So, let me provide you with the point of view of Defense both in general terms and in the Italian Defence General Staff terms.

I mentioned to inform you that we are due to receive the approval from our Government for what concerns the Italian commitment abroad in terms of missions and operations for the year 2021. I previously stressed how important it is for us the Mediterranean system and the Mediterranean Sea. It is far more the most important not only for our Navy, even for our country as a whole. We look at the Mediterranean in a kind of systematic way, trying to integrate and produce a whole country approach, so working closely with the Minister of Interior, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, with our institutions, even not necessarily national institutions, to support this approach. We think we are playing a crucial role in this security scenario. Also, we are playing a vital role, sometimes very

difficult, within the EU and the Alliance as well. Let me recall, for example, that in NATO we have been approving a new concept for deterrence and defence and for the first time the Alliance, instead of having a look only at the Eastern flank in a kind of bilateral direction of confrontation, is considering challenges and threats, but even opportunities, deriving from the other strategic direction. We are now talking about 360 degrees approach, and I am proud to say that Italy was among the countries that played a crucial role calling NATO for more attention to the Mediterranean and the Southern flank in general.

What is a consequence of all that? Within NATO we have been establishing the NSD-S Hub that should provide the Alliance with the ability to understand dynamics and threats arising from the southern shore of the Mediterranean, in order to equip us with tools to better play our role in this region. International institutions are undertaking substantial reforms such as the new concept for deterrence and defence mentioned previously. Also, even on the EU side, there is an increasing attention on strategies towards the south. We heard of different ideas coming from the European leaders, but, of course, I am not going to provide you with any opinion on that. I want to underline that now more than ever it is time to outline the importance for Europe to develop a strategic thinking and a leading security and defence role. It should be done, of course, not in contrast with other security providers, but coordinating efforts and actions with them. I have seen initiatives like G5 Sahel developing concrete activities to connect the southern with the northern part of the Mediterranean, therefore improving the capac-

ity to work together and to maintain our channels of communication open and much more.

It is pretty clear to us that our ability to put on the same path different international institutions, not necessarily doing the same thing, coordinating their agendas, helping each other's developing security policies it is fundamental for the stability of the Mediterranean system. By definition, our resources and our capabilities are limited and we must maintain the ability to work together. We, as a defence institution, must develop the capacity to face those emerging threats maintaining a non-escalator approach. Therefore, we must reduce tensions, and we need to develop the ability to handle those complexities in the best way. In conclusion, Italy welcomes this SHADE MED initiative as well as other opportunities to discuss the security in the Mediterranean. On this occasion, the high-level speakers who intervened, provided different angles, different points of view, interests and perspectives.

Dialogue is the key to obtain long-term positive results and the best strategy to move forward to maintain the Mediterranean a safe and stable area for all the twenty-two countries encompassing it. COVID-19 pandemic affected the region severely, increasing inequalities, exacerbating tensions and magnifying threats posed by state and non-state actors. We must develop a long-term approach, such as what we discussed today to be prepared to face the threats posed by different actors and their consequences. We see many positive steps, but we must remain vigilant and keeping attention to the Mediterranean. There is a lot of work to do to stabilise the region and the Mediterranean is worth all our efforts.

“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean After the global pandemic”

Adm. Robert P. Burke

NATO Joint Force Command – Naples

Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI update

We all have a common interest in the security and stability of the Mediterranean. But there are going to be challenges for cooperation in the area: our command-and-control mechanisms, geography, the readiness of our forces, the need to generate or preserve such readiness. This notwithstanding, I think that, by working together, we are going to be able to overcome these challenges.

I would like to talk about the region from the broader perspective of the multiple hats I wear. My job is unique, I have three distinct Commands. As US Commander, I command US Naval Forces both in the US European and US African Command theatres: collectively, that is from the North Pole to South Africa, and from the middle of the Atlantic Ocean to the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as the Balkan coasts, the Black and the Caspian seas. As a NATO Commander, I am the Commander of the Allied Joint Force Command Naples, with the Operational Level Command of sea, air and land forces over the southern portion of the European continent, as well as the Mediterranean and the Black seas. It is an absolute privilege to be part of NATO.

The first slide pictures a lot of European navy operations on a randomly-picked day, and one can see individual nations' flags, a NATO-flagged operation, as well as a lot of bilateral operations - as per each and every day.

This shows that NATO forces have a consistent presence throughout the region. And if one of our adversaries took just about any day on the calendar and looked at our NATO forces, whether they are flying as national



missions, standing NATO maritime groups, or bilateral operations, it would clearly see us all as NATO and European partners working together, painting a pretty credible deterrent picture. The way in which we work together, multi-nationally and jointly between our land, sea and air forces, on a routine basis, shows that we are ready to defend our territories, if we are called upon.

And this is key, since we are facing such a dynamic strategic environment: we have seen a resurgence of aggressive actions carried out by Russia, and China has been growing its influence in our area of responsibility (AOR). To be added to that, there is the ever-present threat of terrorists: there are many non-state actors out there that will go out of their way to harm us, our Alliance, or our partners. All those things together represent both challenges and opportunities that we can address together as an Alliance, as partners, in any manner in which we want to work together.

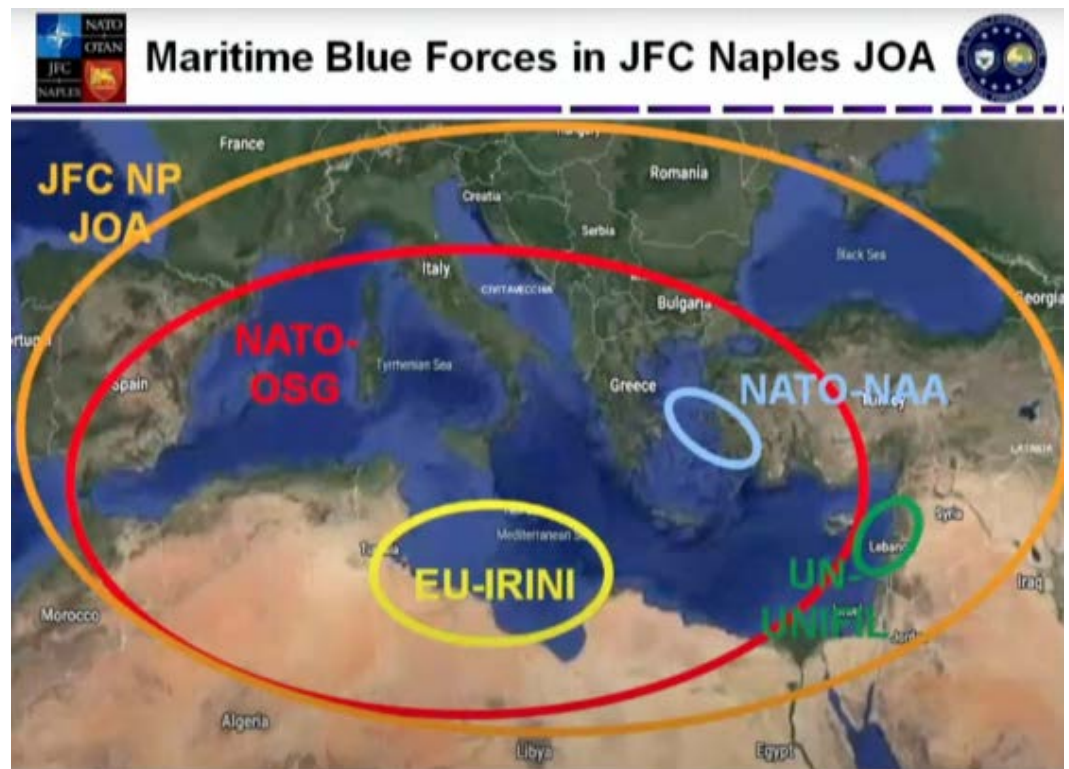
One of the big elements of the realignment we are doing within NATO is to take a strategic look at our deterrence activities, whose comprehensive picture - although there are a lot of individual nations, a lot of al-

lied efforts, and a lot of organisations working together - is not always necessarily organised and coherent. We are thus in the process of finalising a strategic deterrence initiative that will set a framework for me, as a Joint Force Commander, to write more specific plans that will concern both pre-planned and pre-emptive, proactive deterrence activities, while also making us reactive in showing up when our adversaries do something. As an Alliance, we are working to adapt our military capabilities in this sense.

Notably, this is very consistent with what has already been mentioned as a 360-degree approach to security: now that the world has gotten smaller for a number of different reasons, we have to look in all directions. Activities that happen in the African continent or in the Middle East are undoubtedly going to have an impact on the European territory if we do not pay close attention to them, working to influence any of those activities that could ultimately threaten Mediterranean or European countries.

Narrowing the focus on the Mediterranean, there are various blue forces throughout the area. From NATO's Operation Sea Guardian and NATO's activities at JFC Naples, to EUNAVFOR MED Operation IRINI, and the United Nations Maritime Task Force for the Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), all are working towards common goals: security, stability and prosperity for the Mediterranean, the MENA region and beyond.

There is some absolutely phenomenal work being done. But we tend to be reactive, we tend to focus on hotspots, on deterring a single actor, or confronting a particular situation - and that is not wrong, each of these operations is effective and important. Yet, in order to get ahead of emerging challenges and conduct some



operations to influence or, if necessary, react to them, we have to bring along a component of flexibility and agility, rather than focusing on what is a relatively static deterrence posture. The question then becomes: how do you make that happen?

There is no doubt that our combined efforts are having a positive impact in the region and, as a US Commander, as a NATO Commander, I am not concerned about whose flag is flying over the operation: what I care about is that the adversary is deterred by our operations. And it really first comes from the way we message our intentions and talk about our activities, together and with each other, publicly. Our potential adversaries should understand that this is an integrated effort in the aggregate.

And we can build on this concept. We do not have to have all the regional forces operating under NATO's Operational Command. We can achieve the same effect even if each one of them is operating and supporting capacities of its own organisation, and yet, with a shared understanding of the goals that we have in common for a particular set of operations: to keep the seas free and open, deter aggression from our adversaries, prevent malign influence in the region and, most importantly, preserve peace and stability for the Mediterranean region. Of course different organisation will have their different focal points, but the aforementioned positive outcomes can bring us together where work overlaps the single or-

ganisations, where opportunities may be found in the vicinity of each other, and where we can bring our forces together in new and unique ways.

The Balkans offer a great example in this sense. NATO is present in the area with its stabilisation force, the Kosovo Force Mission; the EU has also been there with its European Union Force in Bosnia Herzegovina, currently with Operation Althea, as well as with the law mission EULEX; and the United Nations too with the UN Mission in Kosovo. All these missions are important and working together in the aggregate to provide regional stability in the Balkans, setting a great example of cooperation: even though each of the organisations is focusing on different specific contributions, the greater objectives converge in that larger common goal that is peace and stability in the region.

If one applies such concept back to the Mediterranean, all the operations, activities and missions of various stakeholders have slightly different focal points, approaches or geographic focuses, but we have the same kind of common goals. This is the definition of cooperative security.

With such common set of goals, we know that we can achieve positive effects in static hotspots as we are doing today, and we can also apply the same principle to future hotspots.

This is where the C2, the command-and-control of different organisations, sometimes has been an obstacle for us, but it does not have to be. While NATO has a standing command and control structure, the United Nations and the EU do not have a comparable structure: for very good reasons, in these organisations things have to be worked through at a political level for each specific operation; there are differences in how the Headquarters are brought together, how the missions are approved in the respective political processes. It is a deliberate process, it has merits, but it is not fast. NATO it is not exactly a pick-up game either: our operations have to be agreed upon by all the Allies in the North Atlantic Council, then we have to figure out how we are going to get the forces to support the operation and any follow-on processes. And yet, since we do have that command and control structure already in place and we do have standing NATO forces, that saves some time. Still, it is not a race, and in many cases our differences proved to bring together a better product in the end.

In the Horn of Africa, for instance, NATO forces came in first with Allied Protector, using the standing NATO maritime group, and the EU then followed with Operation Atalanta: from 2009 to 2016, NATO's Operation Ocean Shield worked closely with EU Operation Atalanta as well as the US combined Task Force 151 and individual countries' contributions to the operations. That international naval force deterred pirates from attacking ships and ultimately helped contribute to the suppression of piracy in the Horn of Africa maritime region.

We have to recognise how and where we can nest our capabilities together to achieve our common goals.

If one turns that back to NATO's strategic deterrence initiative in our operating areas and looks at how each of our member nations are being faced with the same resource constraints and, overall, the same security concerns, this brings together the opportunity for teaming.

There are areas that are not so well covered by an allied or a bilateral effort. The Black Sea region is in my joint operating area as a NATO Commander, but we do not have permanent forces there. We have a lot of them in the Mediterranean, but nothing comparable in the Black Sea. Therefore, I would envision that, under this new strategic deterrence initiative, I would be able to use my joint coordination authority for NATO components as the NATO MARCOM, NATO AIRCOM. Or, under my US hat, to benefit from the bilateral arrangements we have with the Black Sea maritime nations and bring together joint and combined activities in the area in order to meet each other's specific objectives, while at the same time achieving the greater goals of peace and stability. Those formal linkages are absolutely important, both for solving current problems and preparing for future challenges, but it is also crucial that we can dispose of some mechanism enabling us to coordinate routinely talk about these issues and activities.

Moving to the South, there are a lot of NATO and national bilateral training and capacity-building initiatives in the African continent, the Middle East and the Gulf region. But are they coordinated? Are they organised? And what does the overall effort look like in the view of the partners that we are trying to help? Is it coherent? We often bring our expertise to those nations in an incoherent fashion, and I think that the NATO Strategic Direction South Hub can perhaps set a foundation for a

stronger coordinating mechanism for this sort of efforts in Africa. Ultimately, we could put something similar together for the Mediterranean region as a whole.

We are looking at the African continent for multiple reasons. Terrorism is a threat, and refugees and migrants' flows from the Middle East and North Africa are susceptible to exploitation and infiltration by terrorists and other nefarious actors. Moreover, we have further transnational threats. Russia has already been mentioned, and there are increasingly aggressive military operations carried out by China in the region as well: they are in Africa probably to a greater extent than they are in Europe and we are not acting fast enough. We need to do more in Africa, because all of us will benefit from enhanced security and stability in the South, from where, notably, a lot of nations have been reaching out.

It is now known that Chinese deals in the area often come with a heavy cost in terms of financial resources and even, sometimes, at territorial costs. Therefore, we have to be there, as NATO, as European and Mediterranean nations, and be a partner of choice.

For what concerns my US Commander hat, we are demonstrating our abilities to work along with other

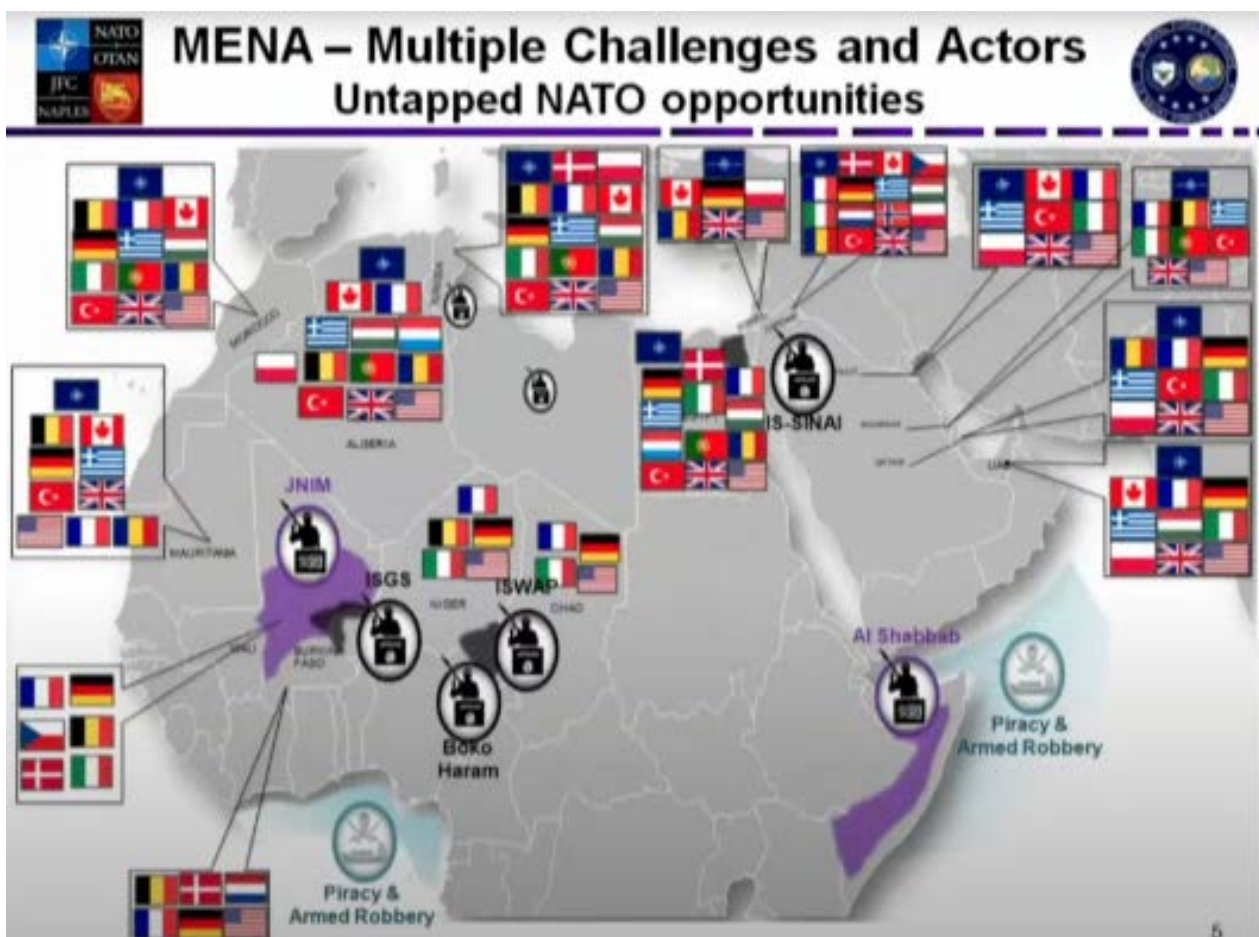
actors in the Mediterranean through an exercise series called Phoenix Express.

It focuses on safety and security and it highlights a great example of our collective security efforts, since we have had so many thoughtful contributions from so many nations.

EUNAVFOR MED coordinates the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy's capacity-building efforts, and it was at this very forum, SHADE MED, that in November 2017 my staff learned from the discussions that there was not a mechanism in place to assess the training effectiveness for the Libyan Coast Guard, beyond operations at sea. And that is where Phoenix Express stepped in.

My staff worked along with the EUNAVFOR MED's team and got together with both the Libyan Coast Guard and the Navy, asking if they would consider observing or even participating in the exercise. The Italian Coast Guard and others in the European Naval Force Mediterranean had done a great job in developing the Libyan Coast Guard and, by the time we asked, they were ready to do much more than observe.

A few weeks later, they came out to observe Phoenix Express 2018, and then actually participated in the 2019





exercise. We had great interactions with them during the planning processes and in the exercise itself.

It is a perfect example of how maritime partnerships enable nations to share responsibilities and collectively respond to challenges and threats: a more capable Libyan Coast Guard and Navy is going to be able to help its country to improve its own maritime stability, security and governance, as well as to enforce the UN Security Council Resolutions banning weapons and oil smuggling.

We all benefit from working side by side, with an invitation or even a conversation: something we can do at forums just like this that lead to strengthened relations and tangible results. Even small changes across a theatre like ours will help us move forward.

Peace and stability in the Mediterranean are going to require enduring naval presence to enforce the international order and law. And to achieve enduring effective naval presence, we need to have partnerships working towards common goals. We all have to continue to innovate and look at new ways of doing business. We live in a really complex security environment that is going to test our forces, we have to be ready to deter and we need to strengthen our cooperative relationships as we ensure

that our naval forces are prepared to work together to achieve common goals: deterring aggression and malign behaviour, keeping the sea free and open, and preserving peace and stability.

I, in turn, would ask you what more can we be doing? How else can we work together to ensure that we are not duplicating efforts, but rather optimising our resources? I look forward to partnering with each of you and your organisations in any way that I can and in any of my Command hats, and I know that my entire team does as well. We have accomplished some phenomenal things so far and I know we can do even more.



“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean After the global pandemic”

R.Adm. Jean-Michel Martinet
DCOM EUNAVFOR MED

Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI update

The Libyan peace process aims at resolving the civil war in Libya. Among the numerous meetings, last January's conference in Berlin involved many world powers, international and regional organisations, and representative of countries, all committed to find a peaceful solution to the Libyan armed conflict. To make this happen, on the 17th of February 2020, the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union decided to launch a new operation focused on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) on the arms embargo on the coast of Libya through a satellite and maritime assets, while closing the former EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia.

Operation IRINI was launched on the 31st of March 2020 and, despite COVID-19 pandemic, it effectively started its activity at sea on the 4th of May. In addition, on the 10th of September the first inspection activity took place at sea and full operation capability was declared.

Operation IRINI is now the most important command defense and security policy military operation of the European Union. Its political vision was provided by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr. Joseph Borrell, at the launching of the operation. It reflects the role of European defense within the European Union and the holistic approach agreed at the Berlin conference. The military instrument alone cannot resolve any conflict. IRINI is not the only tool to contribute to the end of the long Libyan conflict, involving political, military, economic and humanitarian track, as clearly stated yesterday by Mr. Borrell and Ms. Turco Williams.

The initial mandate of the Operation is set for one year, until the end of March 2021. IRINI's tasks are the same than the previous EUNAVFOR MED operation, but in a different order. The arms embargo has become our main duty, together with the capacity building and training of the Libyan Coast Guard and

Navy, the gathering of information on illicit smuggling, and the disruption of the business model of human trafficking networks. These tasks have been translated in terms of effects in our operational plan. The requested effects are:

- Understanding the occurrence of arms, petroleum and human smuggling networks by exploiting data provided by our assets, intelligence and satellite sources;
- Disrupting the maritime supplies of arms to Libya and monitoring the weapons trafficking connected to air and overland. IRINI's presence exercises also a consistent deterrent effect, influencing international supporters of the Libya war parties.
- Contributing to the European comprehensive capacity building process in Libya, by supporting the development of the capacities of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy;
- Assisting law enforcement agencies in their actions against migrants' smugglers and traffickers by monitoring their activities.

To deliver these effects, as of November 27th 2020, the Operation counts on three maritime ships from Italy, Greece and Germany. The Hellenic frigate ADRIAS hosts the fourth Commander and his staff, then there is the Italian ship Fulgosi, and the German frigate Hamburg. To support these ships, we add three others assets: two ships from Italy and one from France. We can also rely on a continuous basis on three maritime patrols and reconnaissance aircrafts from Poland, Luxemburg and France, and one early warnings aircraft from Greece. This latter is particularly important as it is able to provide advanced air detection capabilities to find possible air embargo breakers, as well as the French AWACS that supports IRINI on a regular basis. The Italian Navy provides

us with very interesting surveillance and monitoring capabilities. All these units help to build up the maritime situational awareness and performing maritime interdiction operations.

Operation IRINI acts in full compliance with the international law and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. Especially important is resolution 2292, 2016, that authorises offshore inspections and port diversions of suspected embargo breakers. This resolution was extended until the 5th of June 2021. According to our analysis, embargo breakers could have different pattern of life. Actors in Tripolitania receive arms in particular, but not only, via maritime routes; while, the so-called Haftar army receives arms mostly via aerial and land routes. Operation IRINI is not against anybody or any country. It has to impartially implement the UNSCRs on the embargo on Libya in its area of operations, regardless the actors involved.

One of IRINI's secondary tasks regards the gathering of information on oil smuggling. This is not less important than the previous task, in particular for Libyan economy. Libya has the richest oil fields in Africa with a possible exploitation of 2 million barrels per day. A decade of civil war has greatly reduced the legal exportation of oil from the country to 1% of the entire world market, opening the way to illegal trafficking. Actually, production and export of oil in Libya is not granted, but it is predictable that the smuggling phenomenon will not end soon. IRINI's mandate is not executive on this matter, thus we cannot perform inspections of vessels suspected to be involved in oil smuggling.

As another task, IRINI contributes to the dismantling of the migrants smuggling business model, using only real assets. Concerning migration flows, the Operation has not produced any pull factor effect on migration since its activation. In 2020, the main route used by migrants to reach Europe is the Central Mediterranean, which represents more than 40% of the overall flows. From the 1st of January 2020 to last week, compared to the same period in 2019, has been reported an increase of nearly 60% in the number of migrants departed from Libya. This is due to a number of factors, such as the absence of mid-term vessels targeting specifically human traffickers; the reduced control of the country's coasts by the Libyan Coast

Guard because of the civil war; the COVID-19 situation; and the conditions of Libyan detention centers that unfit to accommodate too many migrants.

Despite some interruptions of activities at sea, the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy remain reliable actors in addressing migration flows in their area of responsibility. At the end of 2019, as for the first semester of 2020, they saved more than 15% of the migrants departed from Libya. It means that the most effective method to dismantling human trafficking still lies on the training of Libyan authorities, to make them able to perform their duties, including the self-managing of events that happen in their area. This task is however pending on Libya GNA political agreements. The Libyan Coast Guard and Navy confirmed their will to continue with the training, on the track of the success of the past ones during Operation Sophia. A special committee composed by Libyan authorities, EU and also IRINI representatives is now investigating the best possible way to resume this activity.

Operation IRINI is considered a prominent actor in the Mediterranean Sea by a number of national and international stakeholders. It is developing a wide network of partners but unfortunately some agreements are pending. Key for the security in this area is the relationship with NATO. The EU and NATO expressed their interest in working together to achieve common security and stability goals in the Mediterranean. This should be extended to Operation IRINI; such an agreement would have fundamentally positive consequences for the region, and for NATO itself, since many armed groups and militia rise from outside the Alliance partner countries. This also would show how impartially IRINI is currently working with the most critic members of NATO.

To conclude, let's have a look to the results of the Operation. From the beginning, IRINI investigated about 1400 ships and 120 flights, and monitored 16 ports and 25 airports. We carried out 59 consensual visits – the friendly approach – on board of motor vessels. Finally, IRINI boarded and inspected 5 merchant vessels and, among them, three were in route to Tripolitania and two to Cyrenaica. Only one motor vessel was diverted to a European harbor, preventing the delivery of fuel for military jets to Benghazi. The Operation prevented also a motor vessel to perpetrate

the transfer of oil from Tobruk, in Cyrenaica, in coordination with the United Nations Panel of Experts. Since the beginning of IRINI, 17 special reports have been delivered to the United Nations with evidence of arms and oil trafficking.

IRINI was created to implement the Berlin process through the UNSCRs on arms embargo. After six months of its beginning, although it started in full pandemic, the Operation had reached its full operational capacity. In spite of the limited numbers of as-

sets, IRINI has already demonstrated its effectiveness and impartiality, achieving some results in terms of inspections at sea, collecting information and different effects both in the arms trafficking and others smuggling.

For the future, IRINI is ready to do its part in the ceasefire agreement signed in Geneva the 23rd of October 2020. Indeed, it has developed strong monitoring skills, not only at sea, but also in air and land. Our impartiality is a sign of professionalism and credibility.



“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean After the global pandemic”

Vice Admiral Keith Blount

NATO's Allied Maritime Command - Commander

Thanks and introduction

I want to thank Admiral Agostini for the opportunity to speak here today. The SHADE MED Forum is a critical venue to address the broad maritime security concerns of the Mediterranean and I am glad to see that this Ninth SHADE MED was preserved, even if in virtual form. It is really important that we conduct these types of discussions on a consistent basis if we are to adequately address the multitude of challenges we all face within the maritime environment. MARCOM will certainly do its part and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to you all today on what NATO is doing at sea, especially the efforts of our Operation Sea Guardian.

Fabio, thanks for the commitment you have displayed in addressing many of these challenges and the forum you have again provided for us to share some of our own. Although our missions are independent of each other, the value we gain through this shared awareness cannot be overstated and is truly invaluable to those we ultimately serve.

As both the Secretary General and the EU High Representative have often stated, the European Union remains an essential partner for NATO. I look forward to using this opportunity as a way of improving our effectiveness in that crucial domain in which our lines of communication so often cross, and where our interests in emerging and enduring challenges and threats undoubtedly intersect.

Covid 19 and impact on Maritime Actors

Regarding COVID-19, we are all acutely aware of its massive impact on daily life in general, not only in terms of economic consequences on our nations and citizens, but simply by the manner in which we are able to carry out the day-to-day operations of our organisations. The cyclical nature of the crisis, the slight return to normal, then spikes, the mitigation measures, and all the factors we continue to address as they emerge, make this an unprecedented time.

We have had to adjust things like: the protection of our workforce, the restructuring of our procedures and processes to adapt to teleworking, and the calculated approach to bringing everyone back together in a safe new working environment as we are permitted to do so. And if those organisational challenges weren't already difficult enough, we have to do them whilst ensuring our operations at sea continue with safety measures to limit and minimise risks to our deployed personnel.

The difference between us and those we protect is that when the world is placed on pause -- when major corporations, schools, government organisations, and local communities take a pause -- we cannot.

And we cannot, because even as we acknowledge the devastating impact of COVID around the world, we also know the risks of weakening our deterrent posture and the real continuation, if not acceleration, of terrorist actions and terrorist-related criminal activity over the past year. And so, our mission continues.

In these fraught times, I would also challenge that we may very well face a new host of threats. Threats different from those we've become accustomed to. I'm sure we have all experienced this first-hand on the ground-level of every day citizens... those out of work, those struggling to provide for their loved ones. And that is in a part of the world where trillions are being spend to cushion the economic blow of the pandemic. In other parts of the world and across the Middle East and North African regions, as well as in the Sahel, those supports are much weaker if they exist at all, feeding desperation and possibly fueling violence and crime. On the extremist front, there have been calls from terrorist leaders to use the pandemic as an opportunity to carry out attacks. These are unprecedented times, and we need to remain aware of the potential impact of all of this on the maritime front.

Now, more than ever, we need to ensure our ability to safely monitor and influence the maritime environment is unmistakable. This is not something we can falter on.

We must maintain our awareness and we must maintain our readiness to ensure we do not provide that gap... that window of opportunity... for those who wish to disrupt that safety which we work to preserve.

I'm pleased to share with you how Operation Sea Guardian is contributing on that front.

OSG focus, facts, and achievements

As we transitioned from operation Active Endeavour to Operation Sea Guardian a little more than four years ago, we saw the scope of our operations widen significantly. At the centre of it all, remains maritime situational awareness (MSA). Stated simply, that means we need to know and understand what is going on at sea. Who is doing what, and why? MSA remains the key component on which the successes of our other lines of effort rely. And I am sure Fabio would say the same for his operations.

Operation Sea Guardian is a non-Article V maritime security operation aimed at working with Mediterranean stakeholders to maintain maritime situational awareness, deter and counter terrorism and enhance capacity building.

Our current tasks include maritime counter-terrorism, supporting maritime situational awareness and contributing to partner capacity building. If directed, the operation can also act to uphold freedom of navigation, conduct interdiction tasks, counter proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and protect critical infrastructure.

Last year through direct and associated support, we had the contribution of more than 260 ships and submarines, amassing more than 7,500 collective days at sea. Beyond that, we had more than 5,500 flight hours of support above. And while those numbers may seem remarkable - they are necessary - and that is exactly what it's going to take, consistently, and collectively each year as we move forward.

Our commitment to cooperation goes beyond those numbers, however. It goes beyond simply the Allies working alongside one another.

A main objective of Operation Sea Guardian is to assist our partner nations in the Middle East and North Africa in improving their own maritime security capacity. In an ideal world, OSG would not be necessary, it is not collecting information or acting on the seas for its own sake.

We are looking at how we adapt our operations, our interactions, and our partnerships to help other military and non-military stakeholders achieve a better level of MSA, and a better understanding of the patterns of life in the Mediterranean for themselves. That requires effort on multiple fronts, all of which inevitably overlap to a certain degree.

Over the past year, we have worked with Algeria and Tunisia as part of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue Programme, improving the interoperability of our forces and reinforcing partnerships that face similar threats and challenges. We've conducted exercises with the Georgian Coast Guard and recognise that they as a nation have demonstrated a willingness to participate in OSG, and we support those capacity-building efforts as they look to become an operational partner.

We continue to offer opportunities and encourage more participation in OSG to Allies and partners. And with each pledge for support, with each commitment, that crucial picture of our maritime environment gets a bit clearer.

Just over a year ago, Israel became the first NATO partner to participate in an OSG exercise, called Crystal Sea. It's worth mentioning that Crystal Sea represents the exercise standard for medical capacity building in the Med, and we encourage other partners within the JOA to take advantage of the benefits such an exercise provides.

COVID-19 has unfortunately impacted our capacity building efforts. While we've seen continued success through our exercise programmes, face-to-face engagements and in-port training sessions have become quite difficult to accomplish. However, we will continue to work on solutions that enable us to achieve the same goal those opportunities provide. Some of this will be accomplished through more distanced-interactions, or through virtual means, but ultimately the objective remains, so we must adapt our methodology to see it through. As I mentioned before, we do not have the luxury to take a pause, even in the face of a pandemic. So we must press forward and work toward a solution.

This is all about shaping our MSA through collectively enhancing our ability to do so. Information sharing is at the top of that endeavour.

This means more intense efforts among the Allies and deepening cooperation with partners. It means more

deliberate interactions and more dialogue with those stakeholders who can best

contribute to that comprehensive MSA picture Governments, Military and Law Enforcement, the Shipping Community, Academics, and others, to discern and preserve ground truth on the threats to the maritime environment, their pattern, and their trends.

This includes more interagency cooperation, more cooperation with international organisations, and a collective understanding of the vital importance of the NATO-EU relationship with regards to our mutual interest of maritime security.

We will continue to do some of this through the NATO Shipping Centre, proactive engagements through our ship-hailings, key leader engagements, but ultimately, through fruitful cooperation with those who have a true vested interest in maintaining a safe maritime environment.

As the world advances in the fields of technology, communication, and information sharing, we must remain relevant and adapt to these ever-evolving disciplines. Not only that, but provide solutions that account for the information challenges we face at sea, individual nation capabilities, and our existing ability to interface across the entirety of the maritime enterprise.

Maritime information exchange

Launched just earlier this year, the Maritime Information Exchange program is one way we at MARCOM are working toward providing a solution.

What it does is provide a 24/7, cloud-based system that allows individuals and organisations to access the programme from any internet-connected device and provide information to help shape the maritime picture.

This real-time information exchange will enable NATO and non-NATO nations, Law Enforcement Agencies, International Organisations, NGOs, shipping companies and others to collectively provide information across a common platform utilising multiple applications like: Teams, Outlook, Shared Calendars, and Chat. These are all Microsoft-based programmes that many of us are already familiar with, so its functionality should almost be intuitive for most.

The cooperation of non-NATO actors and the engagement of all relevant stakeholders is crucial in order

to build an effective sensor and non-sensor network supporting OSG and enabling regional maritime security.

The success of this programme will be built on participation, yes, but more importantly, it will be built on trust. Trust that we build throughout the maritime enterprise by maintaining a level of transparency and dialogue, whereby users will unquestionably see and experience the benefits of this network.

Beyond that, the functionality of the programme was designed to account for those times where we encounter low bandwidth at sea. Users can still provide updates offline and the programme will synchronise the inputs once the minimum bandwidth requirement is re-established.

Communication, networking, information sharing are all essential individual components. It's when we combine these efforts that we will really begin to see benefits of creating such a network.

Closing Remarks

As we all know, our mission at sea is not one-dimensional. We have to operate on, above, and below that domain—and do so effectively on a continual basis—if we hope to achieve the level of MSA the success of our missions require. And the need for awareness and de-confliction across those fronts is imperative.

I appreciate the opportunity you have provided here to allow us to share our perspectives, our maritime efforts and challenges, and acknowledge the collective interest we all have in this critical mission of keeping our seas free and safe.

As productive as the talks are at this level, I would encourage a similar interaction at the working group level, to provide our teams the same opportunity to learn, share, and de-conflict. I believe the outcome of such an event would result in increased levels of efficiency and effectiveness throughout the scope of our operations.

Thank you for your time.

Keith E Blount, CB OBE
Vice Admiral, GBR-N
Commander Allied Maritime Command



“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean After the global pandemic”

Mr. Antonio Saccone
Head of Strategic Analysis Sector, Frontex

Frontex has been operating in the Central Mediterranean since 2009. At the time we had an operation that was called Hermes and targeted flows of migrants from Tunisia and Libya. Our scope was then extended, with Operation Aeneas, to Egypt and Turkey, and we continued to remain in the area even later on, with other operations named in various ways: Operation Triton, for instance, and, since February 2018, Operation Themis (the latter operating in an area close to Italian territorial waters, south of Lampedusa).

Besides, we have been cooperating closely with several military operations: the Italian Operation *Mare Nostrum*, launched in 2013 and coming to an end in 2014; EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia, since 2015, working closely with Admiral Credendino; and, since March 2020, Operation IRINI.

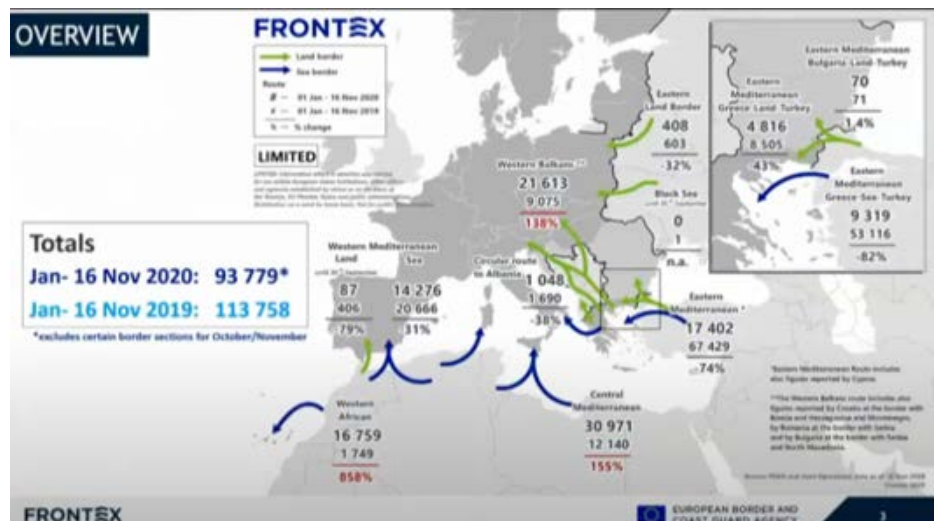
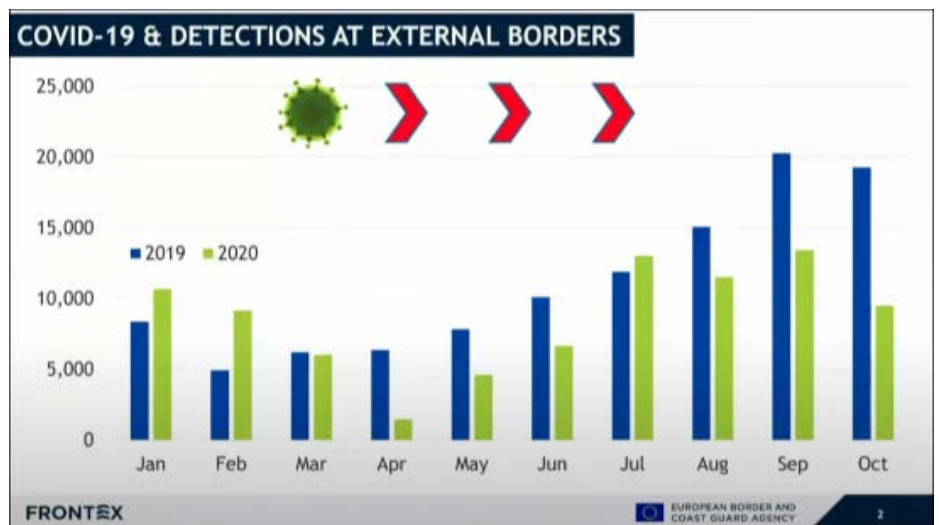
In this framework, we have recently worked on an arrangement that allows us to establish standard operating procedures, but cooperation has never stopped: we are continuing to share our experience, operating and de-conflicting the use of our assets, distributing imagery from satellites and intelligence.

When it comes to the situation we are dealing with in terms of migration in the Central Mediterranean, the first slide shows the comparison between last year (in blue) and this year (in green).

This year, in the months of January and February, the overall migratory situation in the area, including Eastern and Western

Mediterranean, was very intense and higher than 2019. But later in March, April and May, when the COVID-19 pandemic and the related travel limitations and restrictions started to set in, we witnessed a sharp decrease in the number of illegal border crossings everywhere. Migration flows and illegal border crossings by sea then began to resume in June, and yet, they never reached the levels they had in the previous years.

With all this being said, though, the Central Mediterranean witnessed less of a decrease than the other areas of the basin, as the following image shows.



There are two figures: on the top, the illegal border crossings registered this year until mid-November, and below the same figure during the previous year, along with the percentage of increase and decrease.

Three main facts stand out. Firstly, when it comes to the situation at sea, there is an increase of migration flows in the Central Med by more than 150%, two and half times the level reached the last year. However, we are not anywhere close to the levels we had in 2014, 2015 and 2016, when we registered more than 150.000 illegal border crossing per year.

To remain on the overall picture, another novelty is the increase in the Western African route, targeting the Canary islands from West Sahara and South Morocco, which is 10 times more travelled this year than it was last year, with lots of casualties due to the difficulties in crossing the ocean from Morocco, Senegal and Mauritania.

The third new figure concerns a sharp decrease in illegal border crossings in the Greek islands and, in parallel, an increase of departures directly from the Turkish coast (from Izmir, Antalya and Bodrum) towards Italy, especially towards the shores of Calabria.

In the third slide, we can narrow down the analysis to focus more on the Central Mediterranean.

In this area, we have an overall increase of the migration flows of 155%, with the increment in the route

targeting Italy being of about 200%, while the route affecting Malta has witnessed a 36% decrease.

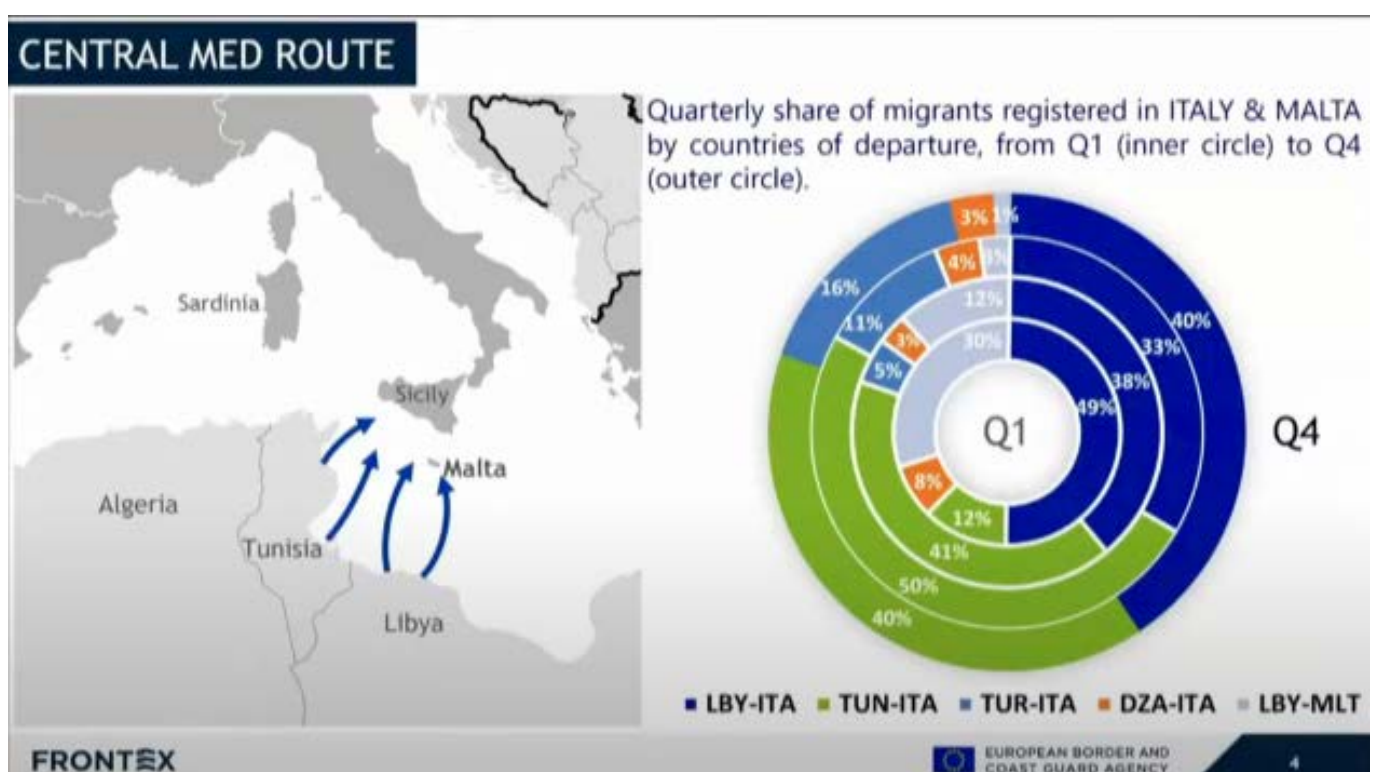
This increase's main cause is the spectacular rise in successful sea crossings from Tunisia, which has become the most frequent starting point: since the 16th of November, we registered more than 13.600 migrants from Tunisia targeting both the Pelagie islands of Lampedusa and Pantelleria, as well as the West coast of Sicily. Despite the cooperation of the Turkish Navy and Coast Guard, a lot of migrants are successfully reaching the Italian territory, and this is a cause of concern.

In the past, the first country of departure for migrants targeting Italy and Malta was Libya, which still remains an important starting point: from there, this year we registered more than 11.000 migrants - yet a lower figure than the one concerning Tunisia.

As mentioned before, Turkey too has become a country of great concern for the flows targeting Italy, most of which are targeting the coast of Calabria, Sicily and Apulia.

There is then another flows' starting point in Algeria, in the area of Annaba, with more than 1.000 people targeting the South and West coasts of Sardinia.

When it comes to nationalities, the most important one is Tunisian (almost 95% of the people coming from Tunisia are Tunisian nationals), while the second on is Bangladeshi, departing mainly from Libya.



Besides, especially in the routes concerning Turkey, other frequently recorded nationalities are Afghani and Iraqi.

We see different *modus operandi* as well, with the use of wooden boats mostly from Tunisia and rubber boats especially from Libya.

The cooperation between the Tunisian and Libyan Coast Guards remains an important factor for controlling and managing the flows so that they do not reach the levels of 2014, 2015 and 2016.

For what concerns some of the Operation Themis' results, until mid-November this year, more than 32.000 illegal migrants were apprehended and 3.250 were saved in search and rescue activities.

In addition to illegal migration, Frontex has the ability to detect cross-border crimes: among the drugs we contributed to seize, there are 1.6 tons marijuana, tobacco, hashish, and more than 200 kilos of cocaine. With our aerial assets, we have also spotted incidents related to pollution, as well as to illegal fishing. In total, our assets and experts led to the arrest of 90 people smugglers and 12 smugglers of illicit goods.

Moving forward to the kind of support Frontex offers in the context of joint operations at sea, what we try to do with Operation Themis in the Central Mediterranean is to provide increased technical assistance to the operations we coordinate at sea borders, in order to detect and tackle migration flows, but also cross-border

CENTRAL MED ROUTE - OPERATIONAL RESULTS



OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

Frontex current operational deployments



crimes, working as well on the enhancement of Coast Guards' coordination.

Deemed to continue until the end of January 2021, Operation Themis involves the overall deployment of about 65 people on a monthly basis, two aircrafts, two helicopters, two Coastal Patrol boats and 11 mobile offices for finger printing and the identification of migrants.

The Operation is closely linked also to other operations in the area, as Operation Poseidon (taking care of the Eastern Mediterranean). Yet, as mentioned before, migration flows continue to affect the Central Mediterranean and, for this reason, we have to maintain and enhance the co-operation with both Operation Poseidon and the new operation we launched in Montenegro.

The sixth slide describes more in detail the scope of Frontex operational support.

It spans from border surveillance with aerial and maritime assets, to border checks at border crossing points (like ports), and we are also trying to establish a daily updated situational picture, while continuing to exchange information with our partners, as Italy, participating members, and other operations, as EUNAVFOR MED Operation IRINI.

Another task is to detect cross-border crimes, including trafficking in human beings, drugs and goods. Besides, we are screening fingerprints and registering all migrants landing on the European Union's territory illegally. We provide debriefings too: we interview migrants to understand the reasons why they are leaving their countries, how they choose the routes, which is the *modus operandi*, what can we expect about the future. Last but not least, we cooperate with third countries (migrants' countries of transit and origin), as well as with the European Union and other bodies as EUROPOL or EASO. We actively



collaborate also with Italy, other organisations such as INTERPOL, and operations active in the area, as IRINI.

The last slide points out the perspectives and profiles we will implement next year.

This year, we have been recruiting standing corps members. The standing corps is going to be a new tool, the first European Union's body of border guards and coast guards, who will be recruited, trained and deployed by Frontex to support border control and border surveillance at the external borders. When at full speed in 2027, it will be a force of 10.000 people that will be flexibly deployable to support member states in their activities to control external borders. 12 profiles with different specialisations will be available.

The people in the first branch are currently terminating their training and will be deployed at the beginning of next year. It will be the first and forerunner example of a future EU military force.

“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean After the global pandemic”

Capt. (N) Gianluca D’Agostino
IT-MRCC Rome – OPS Centre Chief

Operational Update

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The scenario is the central Mediterranean. The red line represents the responsibility of the Italian Coast Guard for the search and rescue activities but over the last years our chain of search and rescue assets arrived in the Libyan area.

Why our chain in this moment is not in the area of Libya? To explain this point, we have to take into consideration the international legal framework that was created to manage normal rescue situations, such as in case of merchant vessels or pleasure boats but not migration flows. In those case, the international legislations, for example the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, Hamburg, 1979, or, the International Convention for The Safety of Life at Sea, Solas, 1974, calls the first Rescue Coordination Centre the organisation that first receives the distress call. This organisation has charged with two main tasks, as in the IAMSAR, vol. II, Cap. 3.6: try to acknowledge alert and maintain the contact with the unit in distress and advise other units in the vicinity. At the same time, it is essential to identify the competent authority able to perform the rescue operation.

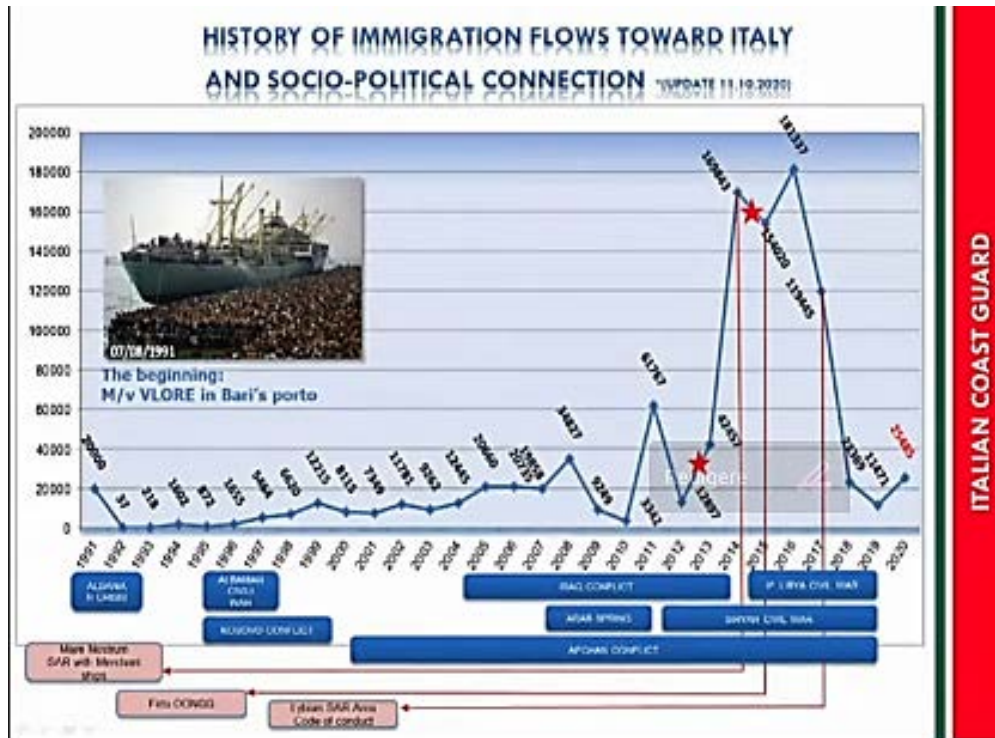
Before 2018, in the coastline closed to Libya there was not a competent authority for search and rescue activities. In 2018, the Libyan Coast Guard was constituted and the country’s government declared its search and rescue region. However, the Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre was no more in charge of rescue operations in that area. *De facto*, the IT-MRCC remains responsible for the rescue operations in that area because all the trips coming from African coasts can quickly turn out to be distress situations and our organisation is active 24/7 to maintain a situational awareness, gathering data concerning all flows in center Mediterranean. It collects data from IRINI, Operation Themis, RPAS and other actors in the area. These data have to be continually shared with all the organisation involved in the Mediterranean.



STATISTICAL REPORTING

The history of migration flows to Italy started the 8th of August 1991 with an Albanian ship named Vlora that arrived in Bari with 20 thousand people on it.

Nowadays, flows from Libya toward Italy amount to 9.837 and the number the Libyan Coast Guard saved amounts to 9.200. This means that the Libyan Coast Guard represent a concrete organisation having control of the search and rescue region they declared. At present, the majority of flows toward our country come from the Tunisian coast but the Libyan flows have a peculiarity because we have to add around 2.102 people toward Malta that makes Libya again at the first place. Tunisians however remain the first nationality to come to Italy.



FOCUS ON THE ACTUAL SCENARIO

This year, 752 large wooden boats and 89 rubber boats were used to transport people. Small boats were preferred, more performing and with few people on board. However, at the same time, the quality of rubber boats that smugglers are using is worsening day by day.

Only in the last months we assisted to three shipwrecks due to the broken bottom of the boats.

Another issue is the large number of undetected arrivals. In 2020, 3 thousand people arrived undetected from Tunisia to our coasts. This constitutes a challenge for the future because all migrants must be controlled to prevent terrorism and also risks caused by COVID.



“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean After the global pandemic”

B. Gen. Davide Re

NATO Strategic Direction South – Naples

NATO SDS Hub presentation

Starting from a glance at the genesis of the Hub, I will present our mission, vision and concept, and I will then analyse how the Mediterranean area results to be the effect scenario of intrinsic instability down in the South - from the Horn of Africa, to the Gulf of Guinea and, of course, the Sahel region. To be added to that, of course, are migration flows, human trafficking and all other criminal activities.

First of all, the Hub has a blended identity: we are absolutely not an intelligence entity, and we were created to enhance the regional understanding through a frank and direct dialogue with the main actors within the civil society and international organisations in the South.

South for us is mainly North and Sub-Saharan Africa, along with the Middle East. To sum up our mission in a statement, I will take advantage of what was mentioned by our Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the Brussels Summit in 2018: “to protect our territories, we must be willing to project stability beyond our borders”. And this is what we are trying to do, promoting any kind of possible cooperation with partners in the South, also through the engagement of regional and international organisation.

Notably, this was already foreseen in Article 2 of NATO’s founding Treaty, in which the signatory countries committed themselves “to contribute to the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening [...] free institutions and promoting conditions of stability and well-being” through cooperation with our partners.

Our mission appears thus pretty simple in words: the achievement of a comprehensive regional understanding, not through traditional channels or military assessment (traditionally accomplished by

J2/Intelligence), but just engaging the international actors in the South in order to enhance situational awareness and decision-making for NATO policies and activities. Moreover, we are also mandated to contribute to the coordination of activities of NATO Allies in the South.

Recently, for instance, we were able to engage with Niger (not a NATO partner yet) thanks to EUCAP Sahel, with the aim to better understand the dynamics and the governance structure of the country, and we ended up electing it as a possible case study on how to control possible issues related to radicalisation.

For what our vision is concerned, we aspire to be a comprehensive source of information, and that is also our aim: sharing information on common challenges and opportunities. We do not want to teach anything to anybody, and our will is to collect and put on the table global challenges we need to focus on and look at from a different perspective - the African and the Middle Eastern perspective, exchanging best practices in order to provide possible shared solutions and tackle common threats.

Our concept is indeed to *connect, consult, coordinate*, to better promote cooperation.

We try as well to be a “Virtual Docking Station” between NATO, our partners, and the variety of regional and international organisations, such as the European Union, the African Union, and the United Nations, that are major and relevant actors down in the Southern region.

Narrowing down the focus of my presentation, the Horn of Africa stands out among our areas of interest, to which we have dedicated studies and projects in collaboration with regional partners, such as the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPPS) in Addis

Ababa. In fact, we continuously benefit from local think-tanks and experts in our attempts to enhance common understanding, learning from their perspective how we can tackle issues like piracy, criminal flows of weapons, or human smuggling all trends that are going to represent a challenging set of threats, and whose effects are going to be reflected also in areas further north, as the Mediterranean itself.

If one thinks at the main actors within the Horn of Africa's region - Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Yemen -, other actors should also be kept in mind: Sudan, Egypt, but also China, that has a huge base in Djibouti, and Russia, that struck an agreement with Sudan to establish a new base close to the port, thus taking part in the global competition for influence unfolding in the region and in the very busy Bab el-Mandeb Strait. It is also worth mentioning that Egypt and Russia have been recently fulfilling a joint training exercise in the Black sea, called Friendship Bridge-2020.

All this, just to provide an idea of the complexity of the regional geopolitical scenario and of how much it can drive effects and repercussions in specific parts of the world.

Moving to the other side of the African continent and looking West, I would like to draw the attention to the phenomenon of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. It represents one of the richest areas in Africa, from biodiversity to resources, but unfortunately, it is mostly known for the significant security challenges that threaten the domestic and regional stability (for example, 82% of the world's maritime kidnapping cases). Piracy and armed robbery are increasing in this part of the world and the UNSC Resolution 2039 purposely called for international actors and organisations to provide support and enhance regional security.

The factors of instability in the Gulf of Guinea then drive repercussions and malign effects into the landlocked developing countries as well, for instance within the Sahel region (in Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso). One can only imagine how difficult is for those

countries that do not excel for employment, governance and stability, to place their goods within the international trade, to enhance and to maintain their export within the maritime line of communication.

In this regard, besides the challenges these countries are dealing with at the maritime level (this year, 2020, they spent about \$250 million in Contracted Maritime Security), they also have to face an increase of insecurity along internal land roads and railways. Such trends too, unfortunately, are going to drive further unemployment, food insecurity and other crises.

The Sahel constitutes another area of great instability. Notably, COVID-19 only exacerbated the regional deep-rooted volatility, often worsening food insecurity, increasing basic goods' pricing, and undermining local governance in specific areas.

The Lake Chad Basin's shrinkage during the past decades and the related crises arisen are just some examples of how the already fragile governance structures in the area are subject to fast-paced changes affecting the region's stability and security. In an interesting study conducted by the Hub along with various regional partners (among them, the IPPS, the Policy Center for the New South in Rabat, and the Kofi Annan International Training Peace Centre in Accra), research shows that, differently from what we tend to think, the main drivers of instability in the Sahel are not only religious and linked to radicalisation, but also mostly related to youth's marginalisation on both the ethnic and economic sides.

As already mentioned, migration is of course one of the main forces influencing the stability of the Mediterranean region, and its root causes could be indeed detected in the landlocked countries in the Sahel and, further south, in the Horn of Africa and in Sub-Saharan nations.

In this regard, we are always in close contact with our partners, trying to identify, among other destabilising subjects and trends, terrorist groups: how active and effective they are in North Africa and the Sub-Saharan region. I am very proud to mention that this

year, in September, we were able for the very first time to work with the AU's African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), based in Algeria, in order to identify terrorist patterns, trends and TTPs, combining our different sources and databases. This is only one single practical example of effective cooperation with the African Union that is going to foster our trust and capabilities to discuss with them common challenges.

Last but not least, we cannot avoid addressing demography. While my country, Italy, is rapidly aging, with the average age being around 50 years old, the Sahel is conversely one of the youngest region in the world, with an average age of about 19 years old. Besides, according to projections, its population will be almost doubled in 2040. This youth bulge can without any doubt be an opportunity for both African countries and European aging nations, but can also represent a demographic bomb if not controlled.

Drawing to the conclusion, I would like to stress once again that we share all our documents on an open website, exchanging the information and perspectives we gain through joint studies and projects.

Another precious collaboration the Hub benefited from, was a great event organised with FemWise-Africa, the biggest all-female network linked to the African Peace and Security Architecture, working to enhance the UNSCR 1325 promoting the role of women in mediation and conflict resolution. It was a fruitful occasion to better understand a continent in which NATO does not have operations, and also to promote

joint studies and projects in the fields of security and governance.

To conclude, since its creation in 2017, the Hub has been identified as a unique tool with strategic effects. Once again, our aim is to better understand regional dynamics, through regional perspectives: challenges, possible threats, but mainly opportunities for cooperation.

Event during this COVID era, that of course has changed our *modus operandi* limiting the physical engagement, we have been able to keep our momentum alive and, through both virtual training courses and webinars, to expand our regional network, promoting NATO as a regional partner, able to contribute to projecting security and stability while respecting the African and Middle Eastern points of view.

As our Commandant Admiral Burke previously mentioned, we are also working with our partners in the South in order to help them find African solutions to African problems.

We aim to be a focal point for NATO Allies and partners, but also for other international organisations actively involved in the region, on different NATO's areas of cooperation, trying to enhance coordination among the Alliance and other international efforts. Our final goal is to increase the expertise on regional dynamics through an enhanced understanding, while integrating the regional perspective into NATO's mindset.



“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean After the global pandemic”

Cdr. ITN Amleto Gabellone

NATO STO CMRE in support of Maritime Operations

CMRE in Brief

The history of the Centre started in 1959 in response to the first Soviet launch of submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and goes through the fall of Berlin wall, to the renewed focus on naval mine warfare after the Gulf War, and then to the September 11, with support to defense against terrorism and maritime critical infrastructures protection.

Today, CMRE has adapted to current NATO priorities, the reinforced Maritime Posture, the new emerging underwater threats, such as the potential use of stealth unmanned platforms equipped with nuclear weapons and the risks posed to underwater cables connections. Therefore, CMRE looks at Unmanned Maritime Systems, the exploitation of Big Data in support of decision

making and use of machine learning and artificial intelligence. (fig. 1)

Finally, CMRE also addresses the High North in order to study the climate change problems and how this could affect our maritime operations.

The CMRE is an executive body of the NATO Science and Technology Organization (STO). STO was established in 2012 under the NATO Agency reform.

The complementary executive STO body is the Collaboration Support Office, which is the former NATO Research and Technology Agency located in Paris.

The STO, supported by the Office of the Chief Scientist at the NATO HQ in Brussels, is a NATO entity which provides advice to the Secretary General and the North Atlantic Council (NAC) on Science and Technol-



Figure 1 – NATO STO CMRE Evolution from 1959 today

ogy aiming to maintain NATO's scientific and technological advantage. Specifically, NATO STO seeks to:

- Accelerate Capability Development
- Deliver advice to the Alliance
- Build capacity through cooperation

The CMRE is governed by the Science and Technology Board (STB), where all NATO Nations are represented. The STB is chaired by the NATO Chief Scientist, currently Mr. Brian Wells.

It could be noticed a singularity of the CMRE role in NATO. It is the unique research lab in NATO and it addresses maritime research. (fig. 2)

Mission of CMRE is providing research and technology support to NATO and to Nations in the maritime domain. Currently, the CMRE is directed by Dr. Catherine Warner since Nov. 2017.

As you can see in the triangle of the picture, CMRE execute basic and advanced research in the maritime domain and is able to engineer some science solutions, interoperable by design, at prototype level and test them in the operational environment (up to TRL 5/6 – Technology Readiness Level).

CMRE operates under a customer funding regime. CMRE's portfolio is 70% funded by ACT (NATO Military Budget), and around 20% our portfolio is funded by Nations (government and/or industry) and international organizations, such as the European Union (H2020 and EDF/PADR Programmes).(fig. 3)

CMRE major Research Programmatic Themes address current NATO maritime priorities (NMW and ASW) and Information Superiority in the maritime domain.

CMRE applies science and innovative technologies to prepare the Alliance for the emerging challenges in the maritime warfare.

In the traditional NMW, CMRE focuses on Autonomous Naval Mine Countermeasures, aiming to develop an integrated mine countermeasures system using autonomous vehicles and reports back on the estimated performance of individual systems and the overall residual risk.

In ASW, CMRE addresses Autonomy for Antisubmarine Warfare, in order to transform NATO's antisubmarine warfare (ASW) strategy from conventional assets to intelligent Maritime Unmanned systems (MUS).

In the C2 area, CMRE works on Data Knowledge for

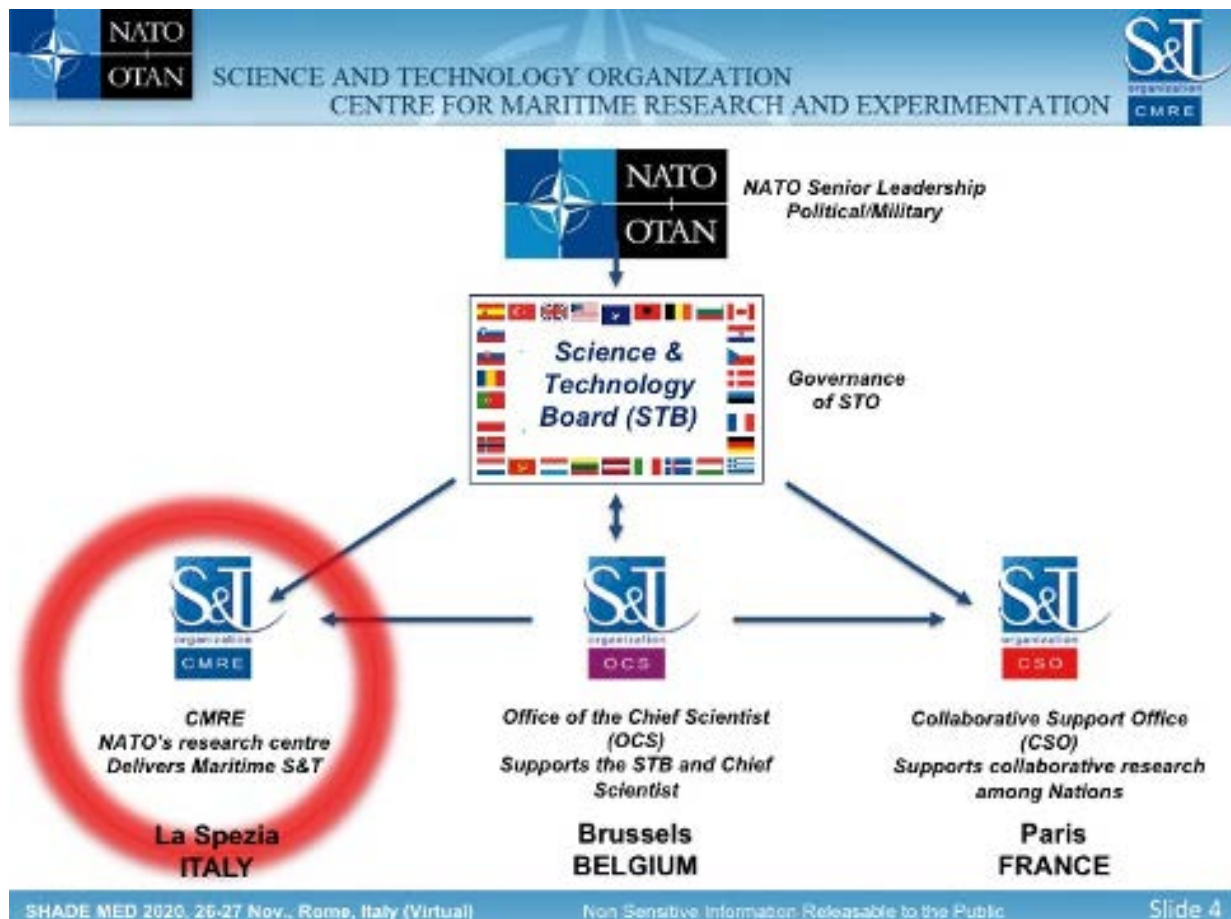


Figure 2 – NATO Science and Technology Organization

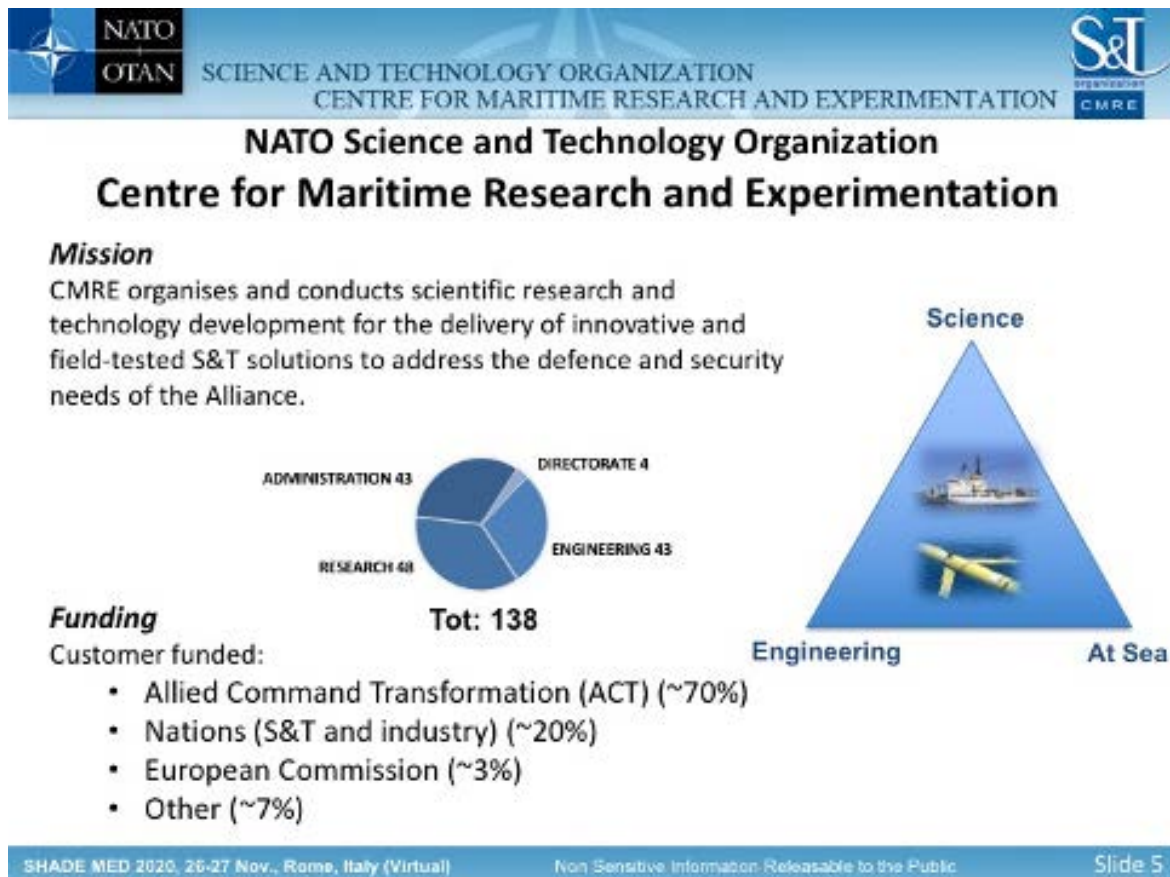


Figure 3 – CMRE Charter

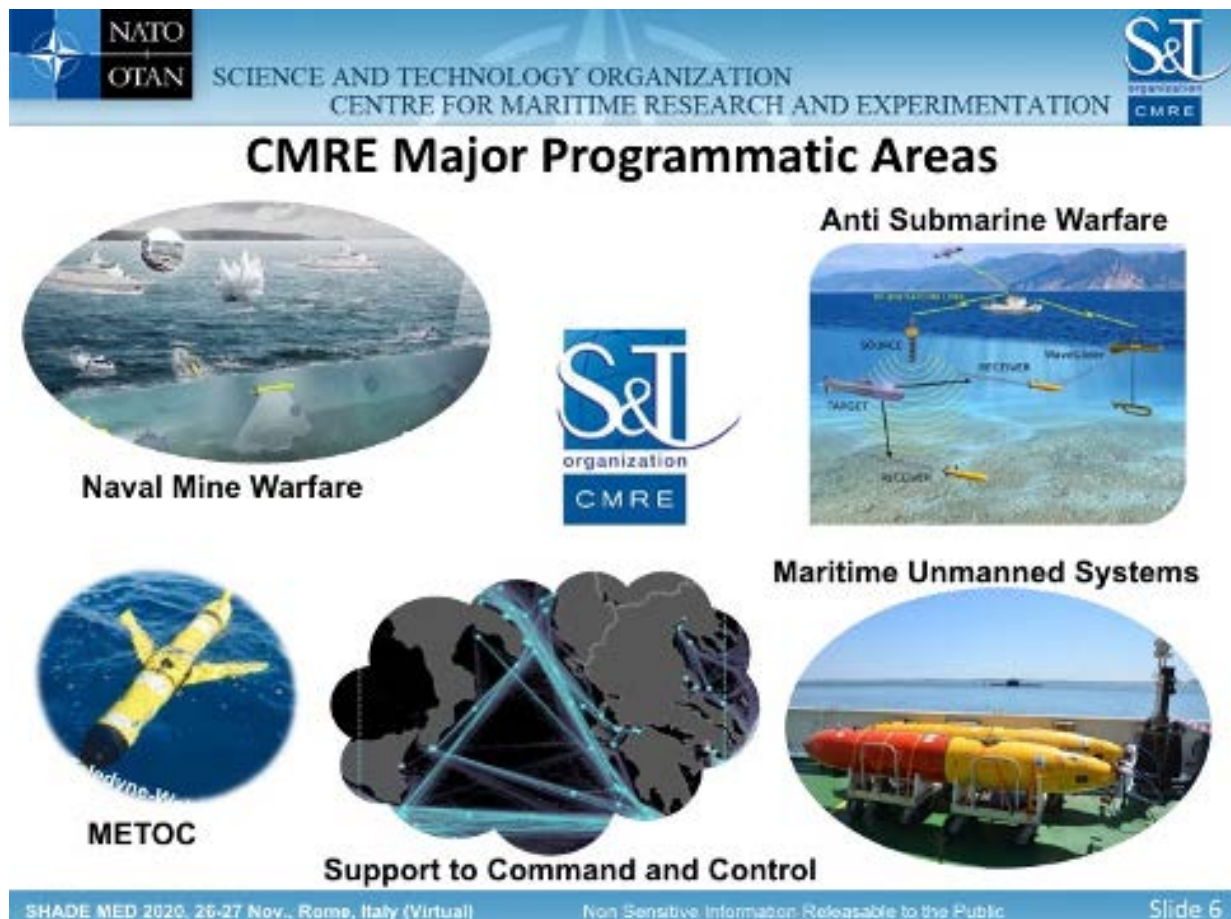


Figure 4 – Major Programmatic Themes

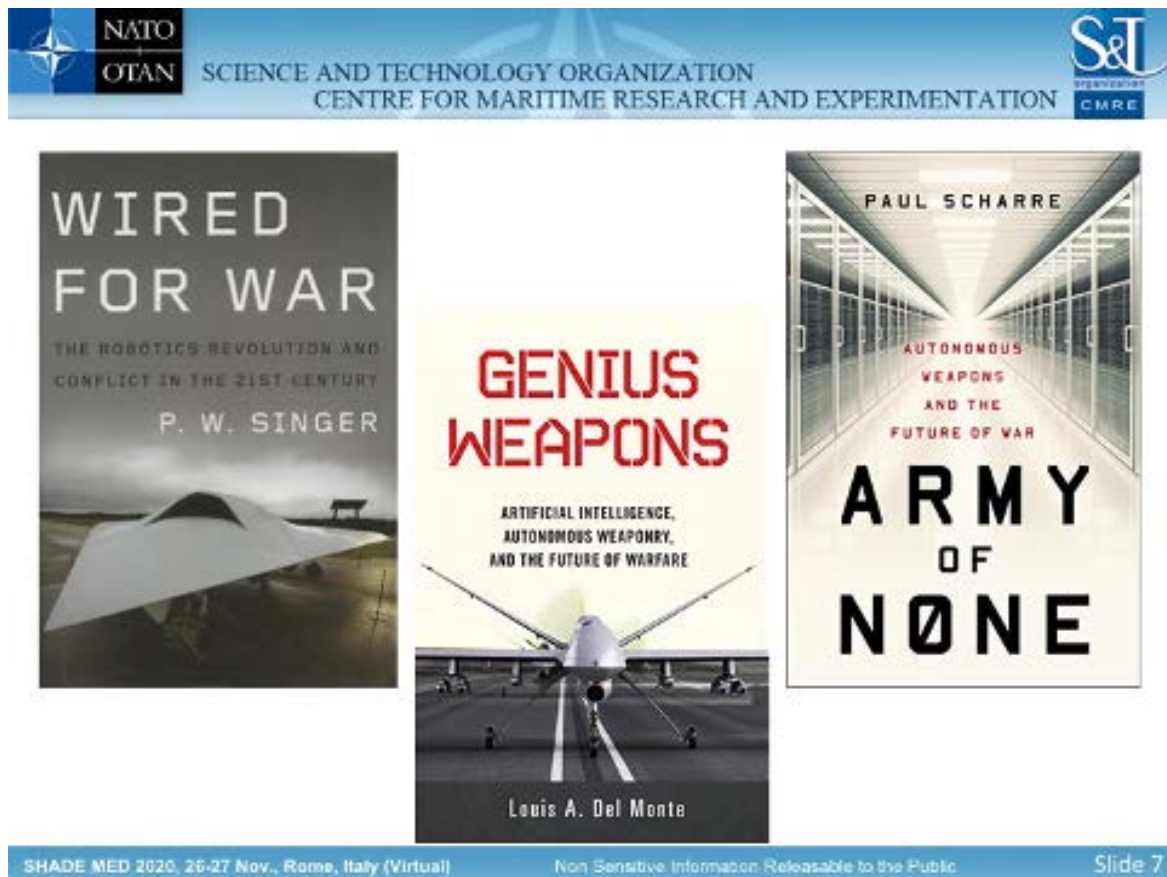


Figure 5 - Autonomy

Operational Effectiveness, thus increasing the ability of NATO to reach information superiority, processing useful information from a large number of heterogeneous sources through efficient and advanced techniques and methodologies.

For the traditional METOC, CMRE focuses on Environmental Knowledge for Operational Effectiveness, aiming to provide environmental conditions awareness to support ASW/MCM and other NATO operations, also in the extreme Arctic regions.

Finally, the mission of the Maritime Unmanned System Enabler (MUSE) is to assist NATO in preparing for the unmanned and autonomous system future in the maritime domain. (fig. 4)

In few words CMRE focuses to Autonomy and how to transform conventional assets to intelligent Maritime Unmanned systems and enhance information superiority to support future maritime operations which will rely more and more on autonomous systems.

CMRE also looks at ethics and legal aspects related to autonomy, in the sense that the human factor is always in the center of the loop.

Autonomy means that systems have not automated

tasks but they are really autonomous, thus supporting us in taking decisions or even taking decisions for some portions of operations, so that the warfighter can focus on what really counts. Otherwise autonomous systems can do dirty jobs (such as countering a naval minefield) and thus allowing warfighters to minimize the risk. So, autonomy can be defined as the ultimate form of putting data to work. (fig. 5)

From Science to Operational Engagement

The following slides explain how the results of the CMRE PoW are injected into the maritime operational domain and which are the added benefits to warfighters.

A famous quote by Helmuth von Moltke, says in brief “no plan survives the battlefield”. He basically saw that the Napoleonic “deterministic” battle plans were outdated by at that time technology. He surpassed the basic approach to plan in a very deterministic manner. Instead battle plans, according to von Moltke, have become way more “adaptive” and this concept hasn’t changed today.

Therefore, an adaptive mission with different command levels in different areas and different lines of battles requires a new approach on operational planning.

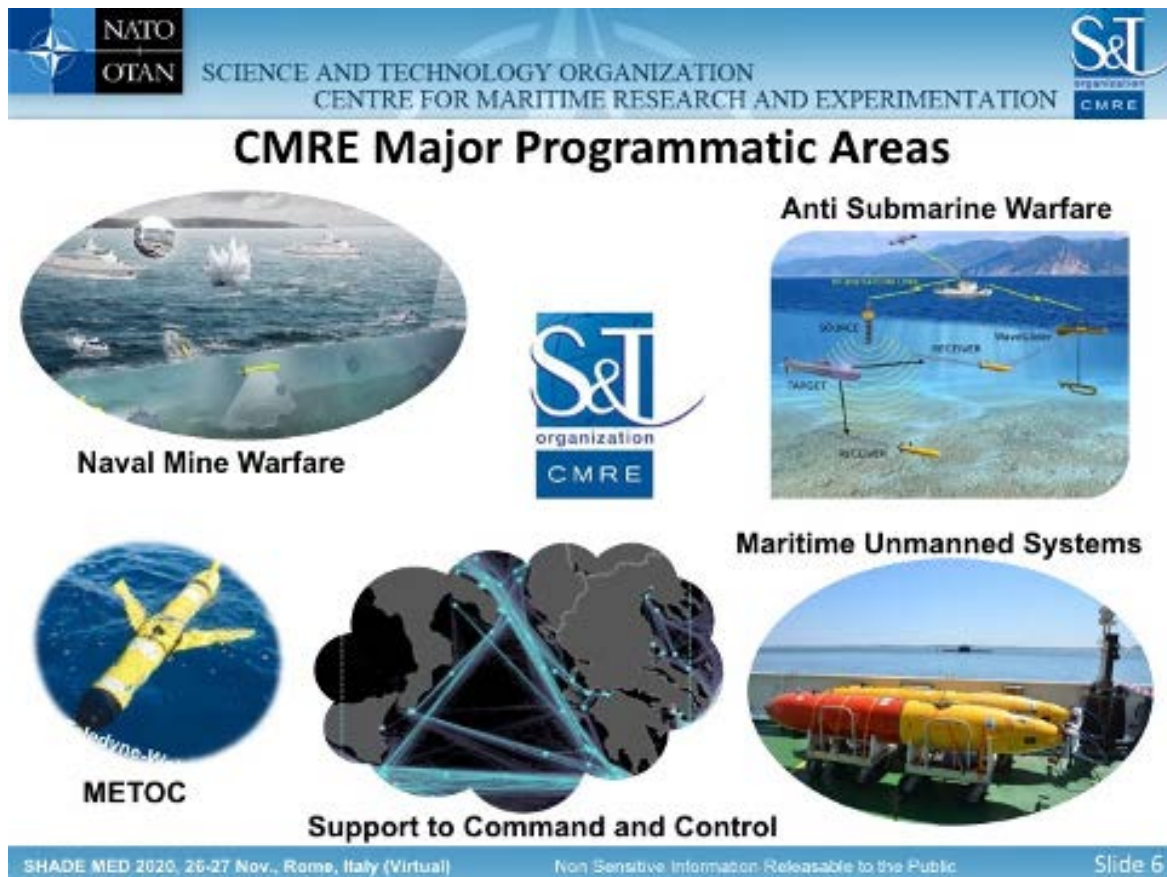


Figure 6 - Command and Control OODA Loop

This is today critical if we think about the new technologies based on Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to exploit the big amount of data available, what we call Big Data.

Such an approach will rely heavily on data science support. And, as explained before, autonomy is the ultimate form of putting data to work. And this is what CMRE does.

The adaptive approach of operational planning is reflected in the well-known OODA loop (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act), which is the basic concept of Command and Control, developed by Col. John Boyd, an US Air Force military strategist.

In the maritime domain, we are more used in the Monitor, Assess, Decide and Direct loop, which is a different way to interpret the OODA concept.

Command and Control (C2) is the cyclical process of analysis, planning, execution and assessment of any military operation.

At each level, the prevailing situation must be examined for opportunities and threats (monitor/MSA), solutions and actions need to be conceived (decide/planning) and executed (direct/execution) and subsequently

evaluated in terms of whether they have produced the desired results and effects (assessment). This is no different in maritime operations than in any other form of military operation. (Fig. 6)

In order to support such adaptive operational planning and the decision-making process, the CMRE has developed a set of prototype tools which support and enhance the execution of maritime operations.

For the MSA function,

- There is a toolset aiming to provide a flexible and scalable data fusion based on multi-target tracking from multiple sensors (such as Radars, Sat-AIS, etc.) with the integration of classified information;
- a toolset on Maritime traffic knowledge discovery provides long-term vessel prediction and maritime traffic graph based on machine learning.

Then for the analysis and assessment functions,

- a further toolset provides an enhanced maritime anomaly detection, when the AIS system could be both turned-off or spoofed;

- A Pattern of Life toolset provides a behavior analysis of the merchant traffic based on historical AIS data;
- A Port analytics tool offers the visualization of specific queries on merchant traffic to/from specific ports and according specific rules set-up by the user.

For the planning and decision-making functions,

- CMRE developed a tool supporting the decision-making phase when dealing with both sensors and human information and partially reliable conflicting sources;
- CMRE has also developed War-gaming techniques that simulate aspects of maritime warfare at the tactical and operational levels.

Let's now explain the sentence "From human to Artificial Intelligence" in the title of the slide.

Today we could see a fast evolution of technology in support of maritime operations. The data available from various sensors are growing at a fast pace and today we

talk about Big Data.

We want to run "What If" scenarios in order we can predict the effects of our decisions, and therefore we can use modelling and simulation techniques derived from science. And finally, with machine learning and AI capabilities, we would like getting a decision support so that we can achieve a strong influence on what "Will be". (Fig. 7)

Now, let's have a look on some practical examples on what CMRE data science does for warfighters.

CMRE provided a technical demo at the 2019 International Maritime Exercise (IMX). IMX is a large multinational exercise aiming to maintain regional security and stability, freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, around the Arabian Gulf. The exercise also serves to improve interoperability among maritime security partners.

The goal of the CMRE contribution was to mitigate the problem of the abundance of maritime traffic data which overwhelms to end-users, leading them to rely on summary statistics and representative Patterns of Life (POLs).



Figure 7 - CMRE Main Prototype Tools for C2 and MSA

The objectives were to provide operators with information layers that reject noise, highlight important features in the data, and contribute to achieving a better understanding of maritime traffic patterns.

CMRE was able to contribute and enhance the Common Operational Picture with traffic patterns automatically extracted from historical AIS data. Moreover, AIS density maps and traffic volume analytics in ports/straits in the area of the exercise have been delivered and integration of AIS density maps with SeaVisionÒ was achieved. (Figg. 8-9-10)

Addressing the pandemic topic of SHADE MED 2020 conference, I would like to show how the analytic tools based on historical and real-time data elaborated at CMRE have been tested to support the effect of current pandemic in various scenarios.

The analytic tools based on historical and real-time data elaborated at CMRE have been tested to assess the impact of pandemic lockdowns on global passengers shipping mobility.

As reference, the image at top left shows the impact of lockdown to passengers' air traffic. These are real data taken from the FlightRadar source. You can notice the

80% drop of the air traffic in March 2020.

CMRE analysts have elaborated the historical AIS passengers' ships data for the first semester of the years from 2016 to 2020. You could note the increasing trend of passengers' traffic from 2016 to 2019 and the expected traffic's increase for 2020, not considering the pandemic scenario. The real situation is a traffic drop, which very critical in the April to June timeframe.

I would like to highlight that this explicative graphical representation is based on Big Data analytics, i.e. 1 trillion AIS messages from 50000 passengers' ships! Such analysis would be not possible using current legacy analytic tools. (Fig. 11)

A further very effective application of CMRE prediction tools is nowadays being carried on in cooperation with University of Connecticut (USA) and University of Salerno (Italy).

During the course of an epidemic, one of the most challenging tasks for authorities is to decide what kind of restrictive measures to introduce and when these should be enforced.

In the picture you can see an operational curve – what we call “Risk” (which is the accuracy of the detection

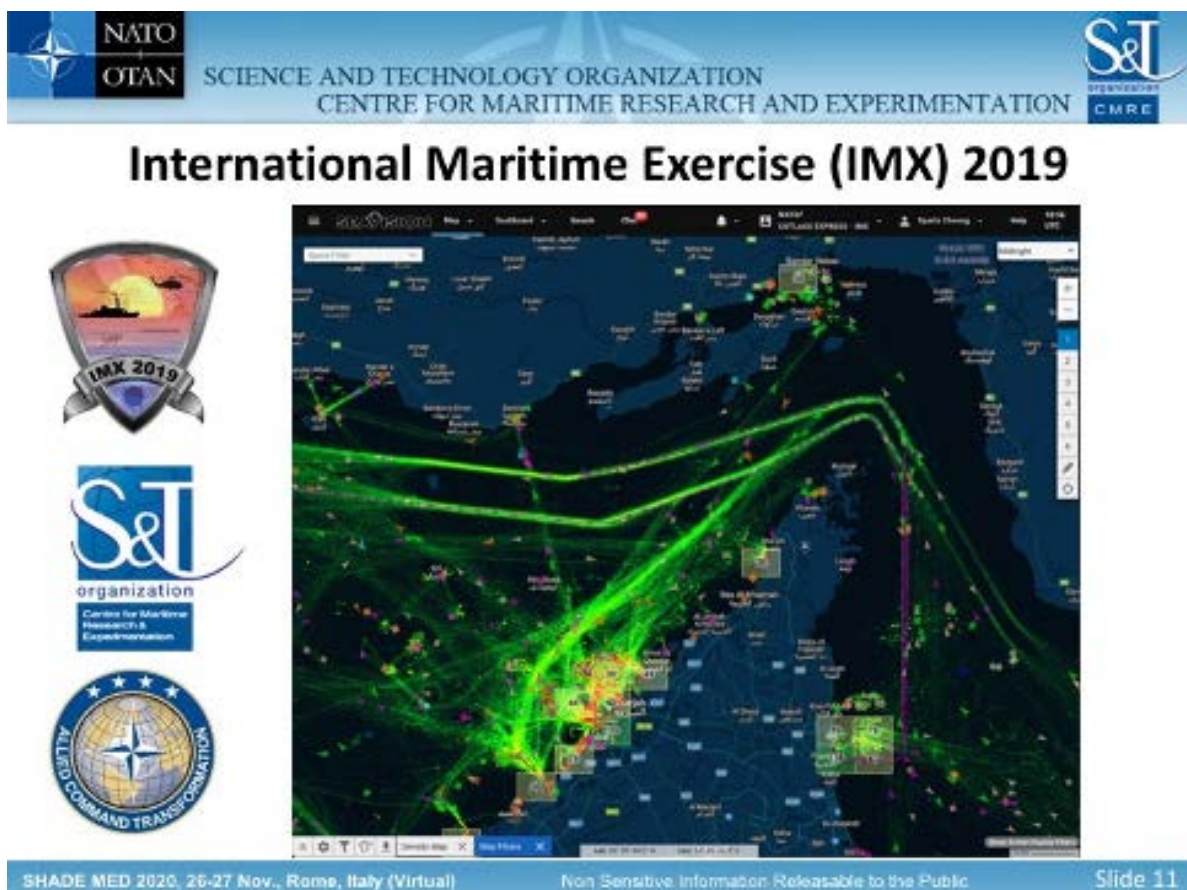


Figure 8 – IMX 2019

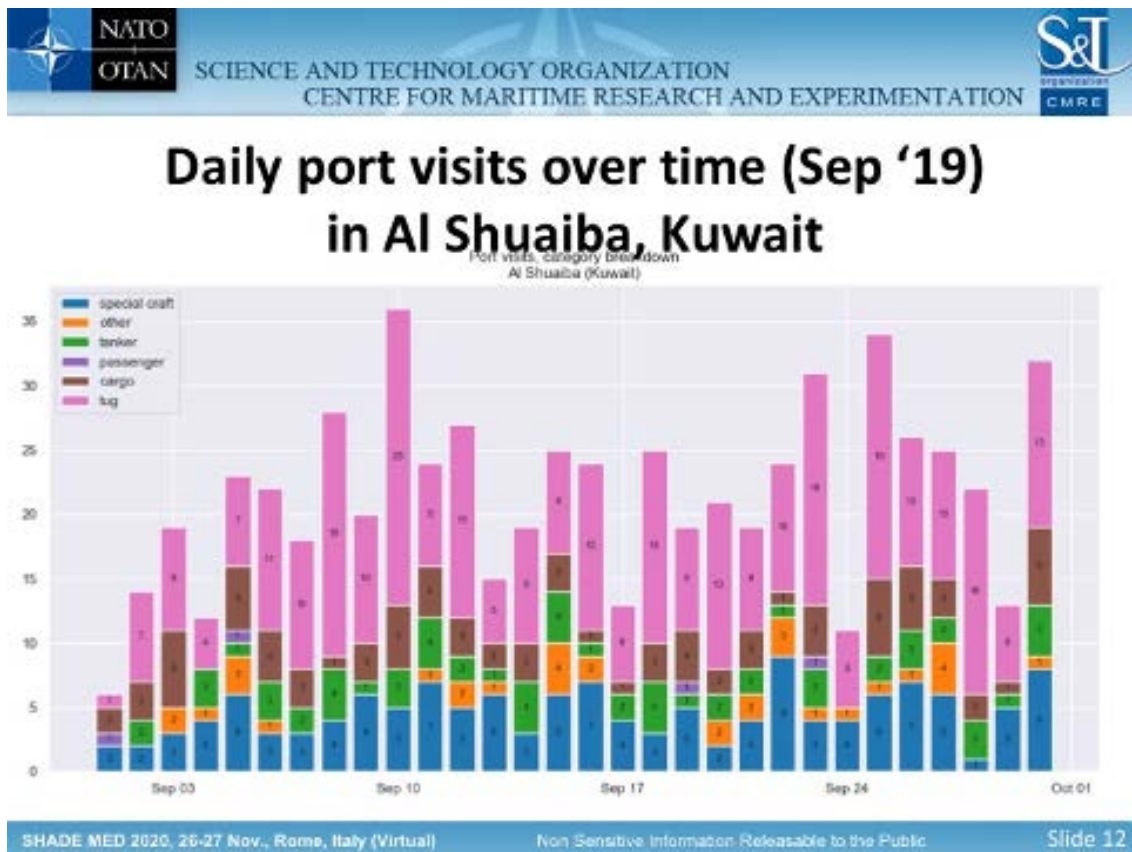


Figure 9 - snapshot of the CMRE Port Analytic tool for the September 2019 timeframe in the Al Shuaiba Port, in Kuwait. The columns are color-coded according the ship category. E.G. cargos are brown colored, passengers purple colored, tankers are green. Etc.

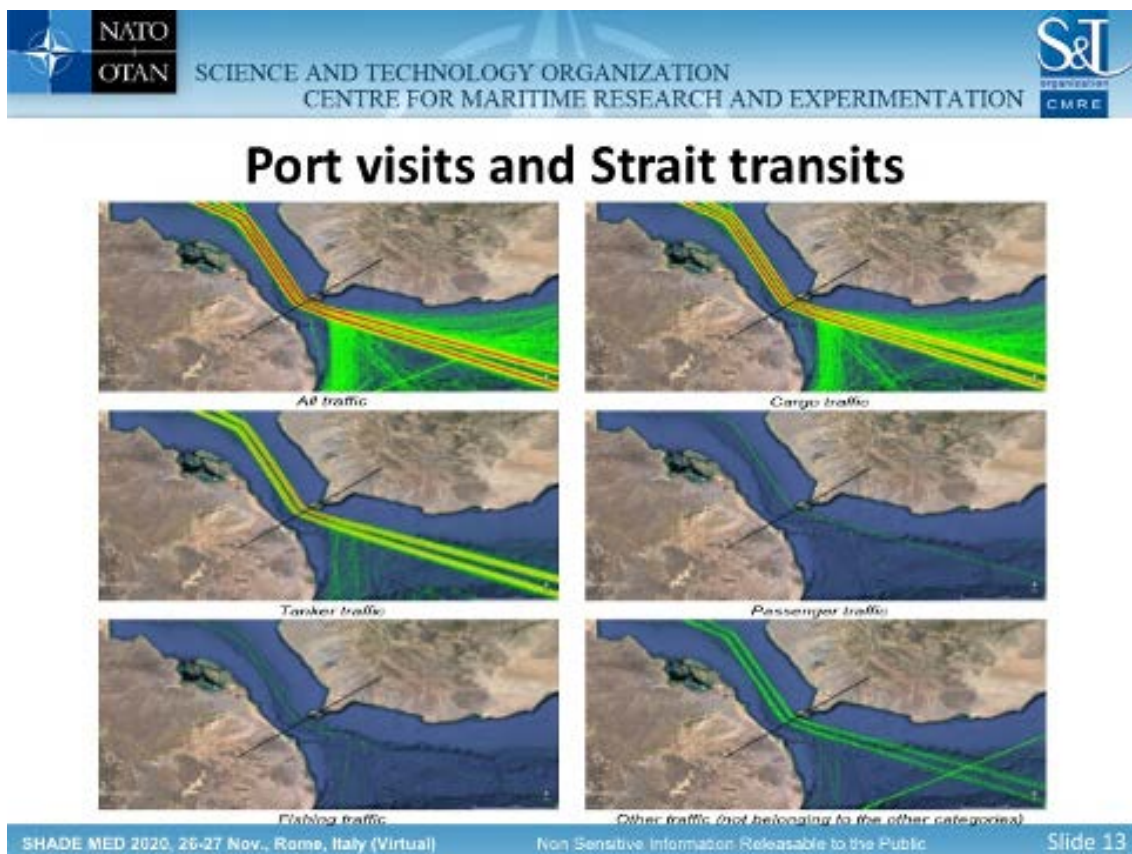


Figure 10 - Some traffic density maps of ships traffic, divided for ship's categories, which were automatically computed from AIS data according the user-defined port shape.

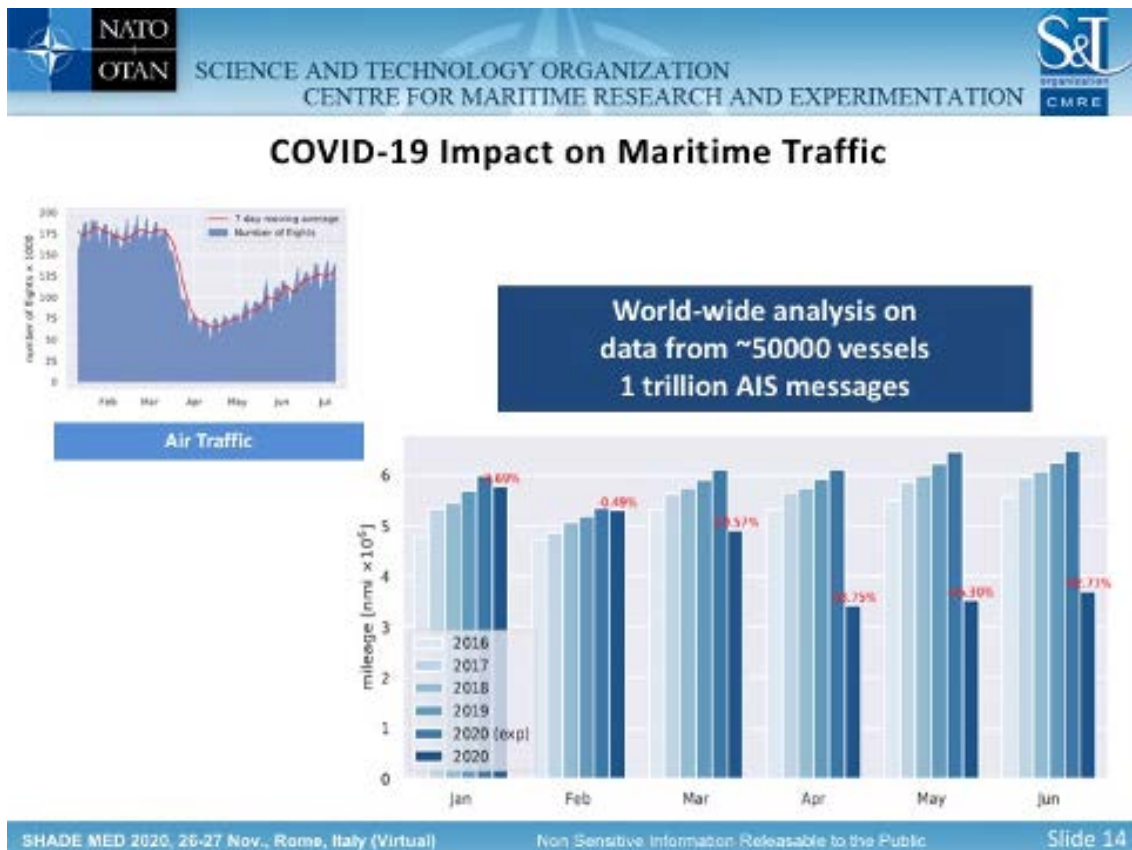


Figure 11 – Covid-19 Impact on Passengers' Ships Traffic

of the infection trend, a sort of false alarm level) versus mean delay for decision - for 14 Countries, where parameter is related to infection rate and it depends on the specific Nation.

E.G. If we take the Italian case (the yellow curve on your far left), if we want to accept an acceptable level of accuracy, i.e. 10^{-4} , we need to decide for proper restrictive measures in maximum 6 days in order to prevent the exponential escalation of the infection rate.

From this study, it turns out that countermeasures against the second epidemic wave have not always been taken in a timely manner. (Fig. 12)

To conclude the overview of the CMRE tools, I would go back to support to maritime operations.

CMRE is working on innovative prediction techniques based on neural networks in order to furtherly enhance the performance of the route prediction techniques.

In this slide you can see a 3 hours prediction of the tankers traffic routing in north-east of Denmark. The grey tracks are the density maps for the considered routings. The blue track is the true ships routing while the green track is the predicted routing, dynamically associ-

ated to the uncertainty range.

At the waypoint, you can note three different routing options. You can see how the neural prediction tool learns from the current scenario and dynamically adapts the prediction algorithms, increasing the confidence level. The results are self-evident.

Of course, there are pro and cons in using a modelling prediction tool or a neural network one. The modelling tool can be used everywhere but with larger error margins, while the neural prediction tool needs a deep learning phase according the area of interest. (Fig. 13)

NATO EU Cooperation Framework

Now I would like to provide few words on the NATO and EU cooperation framework for assessing a future potential cooperation between CMRE and EU OHQ, reflecting the past CMRE support to MARCOM.

At Strategic Context, we know that:

- The two organizations share same common values and strategic interests. I would recall that 22 EU Member States are also NATO Nations;
- The 2003 "Berlin Plus" arrangement set the basis for cooperation in operations. Moreover, in 2003

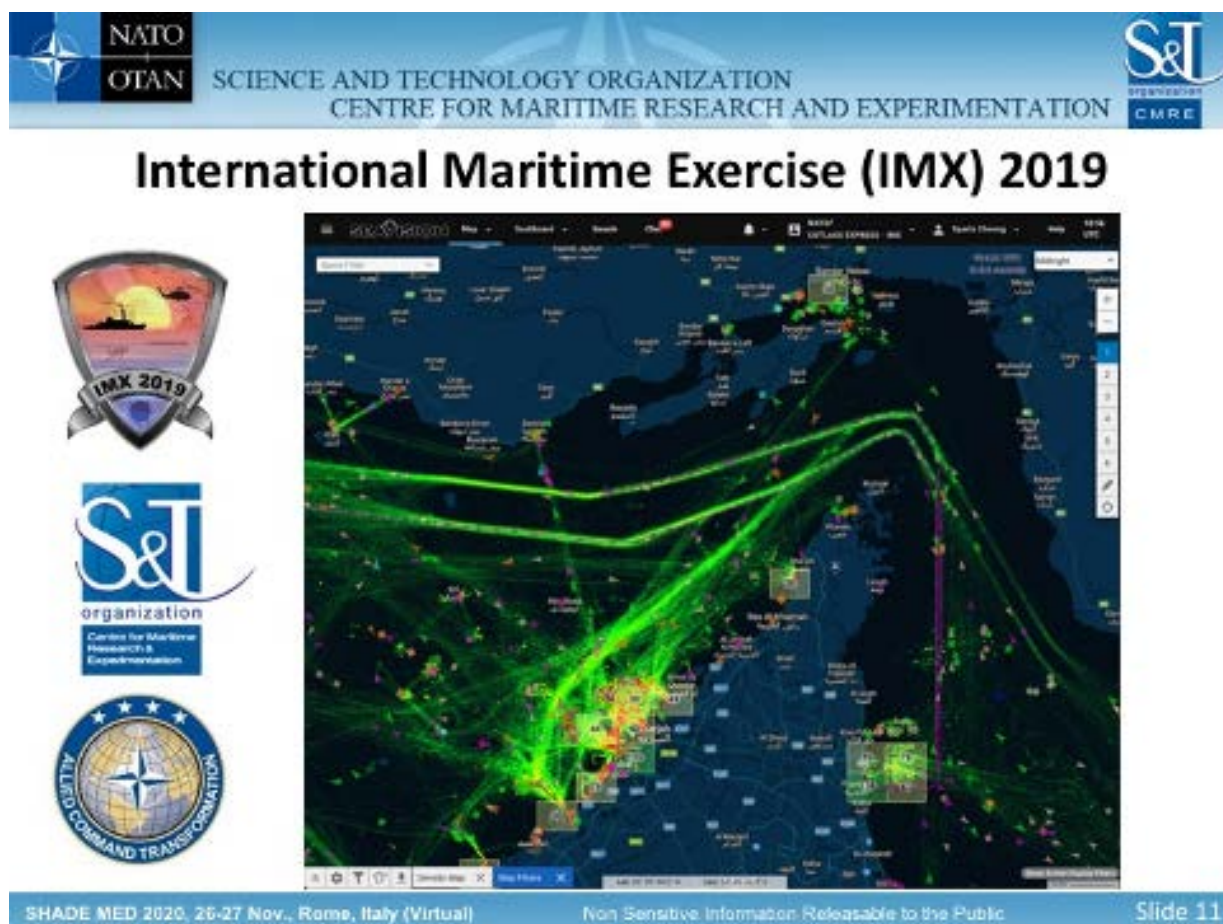


Figure 12 – Detection of the Pandemic Wave with CMRE MAST Tool

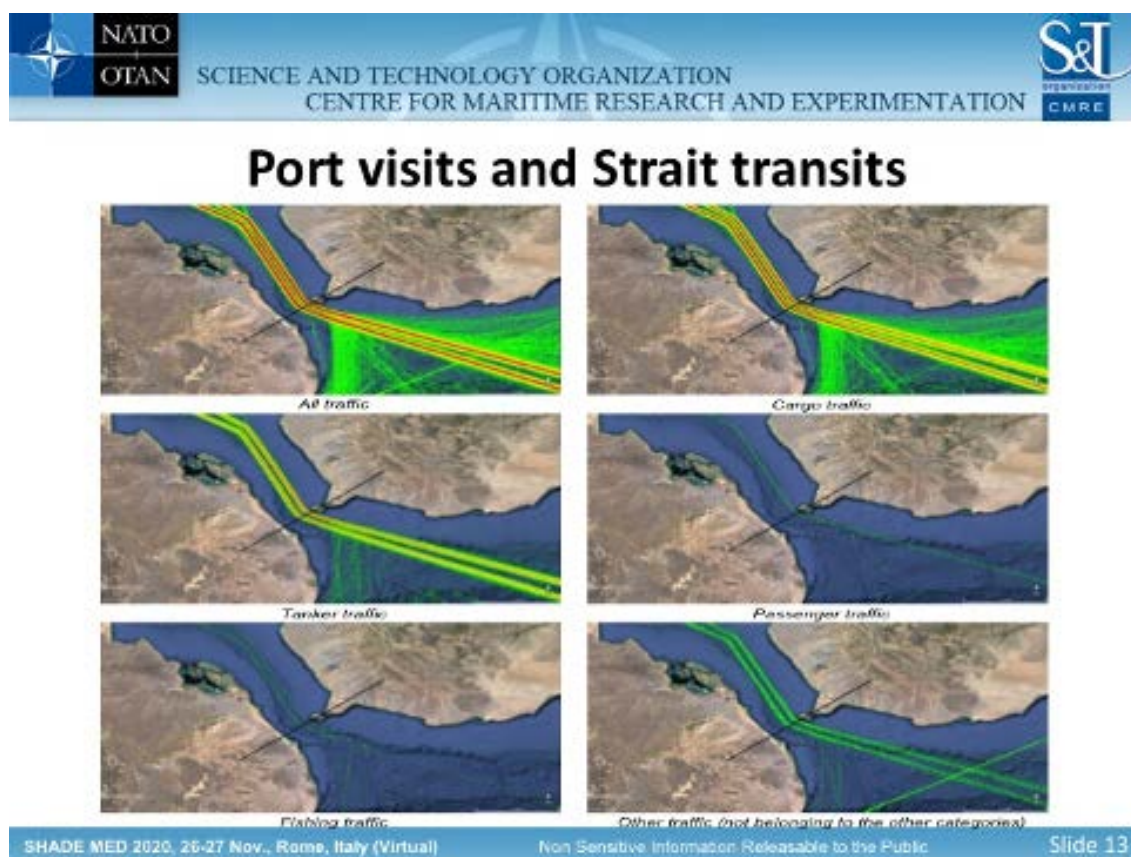


Figure 13 – Route Prediction using Neural Networks. A Danish Example

a Security Agreement was signed;

- The 2010 NATO Strategic Concept underlined the determination to improve NATO-EU strategic partnership;
- After the 2018 Summit, the new NATO EU Joint Declaration confirmed the importance of cooperation in defense capabilities in order to ensure coherence and avoid unnecessary duplications.

In the area of Cooperation in S&T and Capability Development, we know that:

- The EU briefed NATO on the EDIDP and PADR, and Science and Technology Board decided to declassify most recent priorities which were share to EDA staff;
- There is the NATO EU Capability Group which meets twice per year for an update of common areas of cooperation, such as air transport lift, C-IED and military medicine;
- I recall the synergies between the NATO Defence Planning and EU CSDP (Common Security and Defense Policy);
- Current CMRE participation to H2020 and

PADR projects (Ocean2020).

Finally, a quick overview on Cooperation in the Maritime Operations

- 2016 SNMG2 support to FRONTEX in the Aegean Seas;
- As outcome of the 2016 joint declaration, the NATO Sea Guardian cooperated with EU Operation Sophia;
- Same cooperation is for NATO Ocean Shield and EU Operation Atalanta;
- Finally, this SHADE MED conference is a further important brick in cooperation.

Therefore, doors are open for further cooperation and to put into practice the recent NATO EU Joint Declaration.(Fig. 14)

Take Away (Fig. 15)

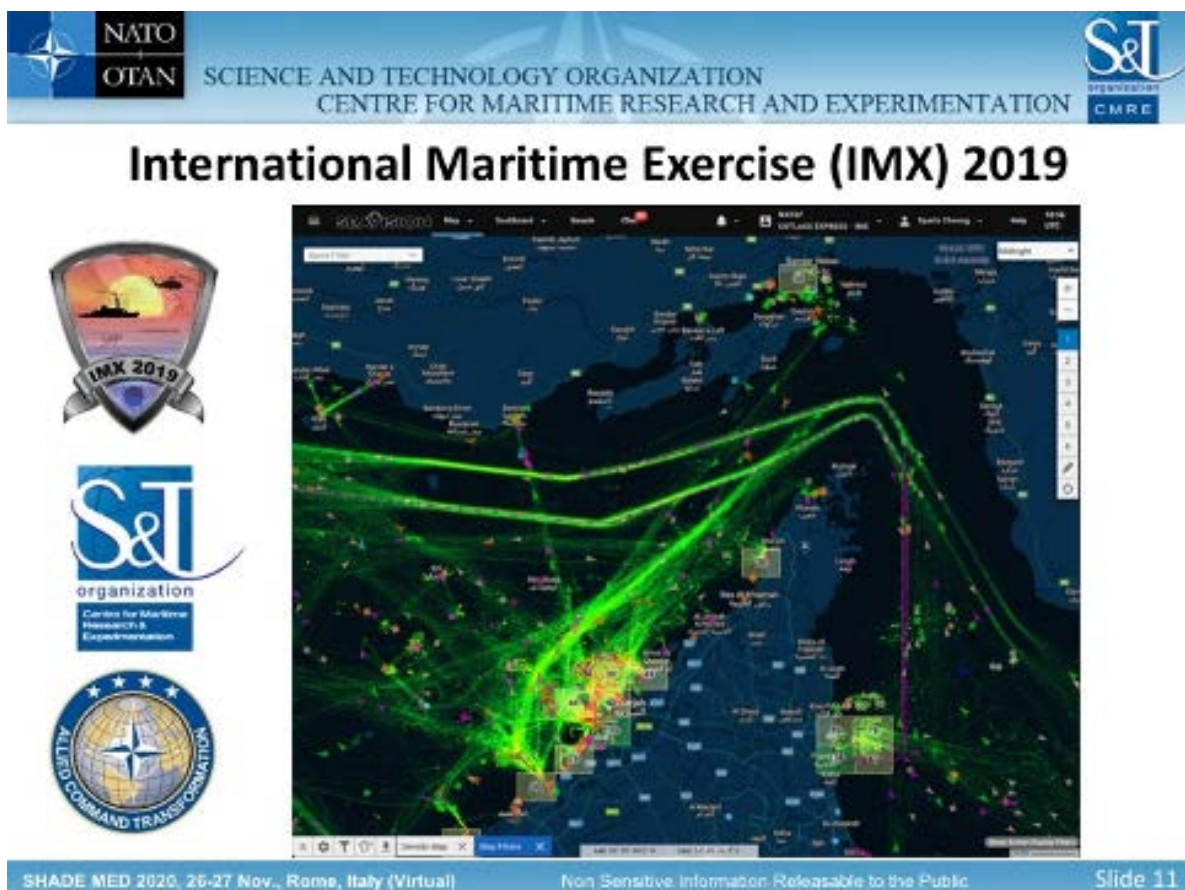


Figure 14 - Cooperation Framework

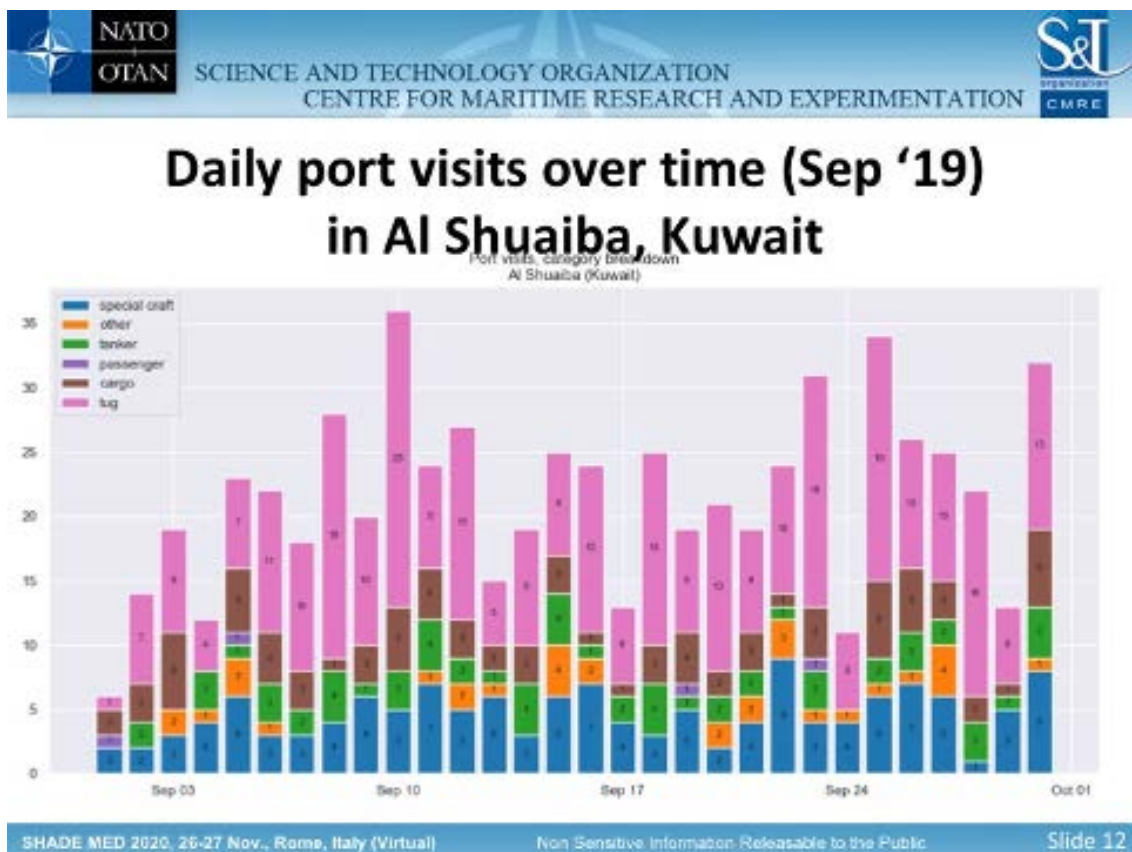


Figure 15 – Take Away Points

“Challenges for cooperation in the Mediterranean After the global pandemic”

Rear Admiral Fabio Agostini

Operation Commander of Operation EUNAVFOR MED

Concluding Remarks

It is with a great pleasure that I want now to propose some brief concluding remarks for this SHADE MED 2020 conference. I want to start by thanking the three working groups, who did their utmost in order to exchange thoughts and improve mutual understandings between the various actors who took part in them.

A number of good ideas have emerged which I am committed to implement, where possible, and to propose to Brussels where necessary.

Another thanks is for my staff here at the HQ, they did an outstanding job to make this conference work even in this unusual way, preventing or solving in real time any technical or organisational issues.

In such a time of forced social distancing, it is a further challenge to bring forward this SHADE MED conference, as nothing can substitute interpersonal contacts. Yet, a remarkable number of participants have stayed online to follow our programmes and discussions.

We have counted a total of 250 participants that have contributed approximately from 30 nations and 50 organisations. Among them, very prestigious speakers joined us to enrich our discussions through their unique point of view, that for sure animated the debates.

A further encouragement came from the way the EU is addressing operations in the Mediterranean Sea. With Operation IRINI being a one of the tools within a toolbox of initiatives agreed upon the Berlin conference regarding the conflict in Libya.

For all the sceptics who would like to express doubts about the capacity of the EU to produce concrete results, I believe that what we are doing to bring peace to the Libyan people is now showing concrete results, although you cannot solve a decade-long conflict in just a couple of weeks, as Mrs Williams said.

As the HRVP Mr. Borrell said, IRINI is a clear

demonstration of the EU commitment to create conditions for a sustainable solution to the conflict in Libya and to bring back peace and stability to the region. Adding also that we have a responsibility to work together for the security and stability of the Mediterranean.

A Forum such as SHADE MED can bring an added value by creating a space to exchange views and best practices and coordinate our efforts.

Gen. Graziano has hugely stressed Operation IRINI as a security provider to the region stability. He had repeated that IRINI achieved considerable results even during and despite the pandemic, proving its ability to go through crises and discontinuity. Adding further to the context where IRINI operates, Amb. Stefano Sannino has rightly reminded us that southern Mediterranean is a region where the EU has consistently invested over the last ten years. It has been done taking into account the proximity and interdependences between the two shores of the region. For these reasons, we must improve the cooperation between the flanks of the Mediterranean region in many areas that go from socio-economic to environmental issues.

The Mediterranean has been the cradle of filth for many civilizations at least for thousand years and have seen too many conflicts already.

It is time now to address fragmentation and instability on its shores by enhancing cooperation as a fundamental means to solve divergencies.

The EU provided a positive example resulting from sixty-three years of cooperation with its people has first and foremost managed to abolish war as a means to solve its differences. Accordingly, we are trying to do our best in order to propose similarly peaceful solutions of cooperation to address issues in the Mediter-

anean and beyond.

The contribution we have tried to provide through our SHADE MED conference this year is that, indeed, we can achieve our objectives, and that solutions accommodating all different interests can always be ultimately found if cooperation truly works.

As emerged from today's speeches, cooperation and coordination among all the actors involved in the Mediterranean is therefore of paramount importance to achieve what we all want to achieve in the region, long-lasting stability and consequently developed prosperity.

Therefore, I hope all the participants to this con-

ference would conclude with me that at SHADE MED we have managed to provide an accurate representation of all the actors that cooperate for the stability of the Mediterranean region, and the results of the debates leave us with a little bit positive thought and wisdom on how we can peacefully address the challenges we are facing in our common Mediterranean Sea.

My best wishes to each and every one of you from operation peace that is EUNAVFOR MED IRINI.

Thank you for your attention and to have been here with us until now.

See you at the next edition, hopefully in-presence.

