

Operation IRINI | Focused Operations NEREUS 2026

Rome, June 12

Operation IRINI has successfully concluded **Focused Operations NEREUS 2026**, a ten-day surge of coordinated EU naval and air activities conducted from 3 to 12 June across the Central Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea. The initiative aimed to strengthen **effectiveness** and **interoperability**, as well as enhance **operational readiness** of forces when assigned to the Operation under EU mandate, whilst contributing to the development of a **shared maritime security architecture** among EU Member States. The Operation brought together naval units from Italy, Greece and Romania, alongside air assets from Luxembourg, Poland, Italy and Greece, supported by naval and air assets, as well as by logistical infrastructure made available by participating Member States within the area of operations.

Throughout the surge period, IRINI delivered the full spectrum of its mandated tasks under real operational conditions, reinforcing the EU's role as a **security provider** and validating the interoperability of Member States' forces. Activities at sea and in the air showcased the Operation's capacity to uphold international law, enhance **Maritime Situational Awareness** and contribute to long-term regional stability.

This concentrated effort demonstrated the European Union's ability to maintain a **credible, continuous and coordinated maritime security presence** in a region of strategic importance such as the Mediterranean.

NEREUS 2026 has also enabled EU crews to train together and enhance their capabilities in the fields of surface warfare, asymmetric threats, and air defence, also benefiting from training activities conducted in cooperation with the NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre (NMIOTC) at the Hellenic Navy's Souda Naval Base.

Rear Admiral (UH) **Marco CASAPIERI**, Operation Commander, underlined the strategic value of the surge, noting that *"IRINI is a ready, credible and scalable tool to foster assigned EU maritime forces effectiveness, readiness and interoperability. NEREUS 2026 shows the full potential that can be achieved when its naval forces act together with clarity of purpose and unity of effort."*

His remarks reflect the mission's Operation's broader ambition to strengthen shared European maritime security architecture and to ensure that Member States operate under common standards, procedures and operational frameworks.

The Operation Commander also highlighted IRINI's evolving posture in response to a dynamic maritime environment. *"IRINI has demonstrated once again its ability to adapt to a changing scenario. Our readiness is solid, our procedures are aligned, and our commitment to being a credible EU security provider in the Mediterranean is stronger than ever."*

This evolution is consistent with the EU's strategic objective of reinforcing its maritime presence and ensuring that its actions at sea remain transparent, professional and fully compliant with international law.

Focused Operations **NEREUS 2026** reaffirm the EU's determination to maintain a **coordinated, rules-based maritime presence** in key sea lanes, promote shared responsibility among Member States, and invest in a common maritime security infrastructure that strengthens Europe's long-term resilience.

EUNAVFOR MED Operation IRINI continues to serve as the EU's standing maritime security presence in the Mediterranean, delivering effective and professional performance while ensuring continuity of operations.

A post-Operation assessment will consolidate lessons identified and support future surge periods, contributing to the ongoing development of EU maritime security capabilities.

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