**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Luxembourg, 24 June 2014
11177/14
(OR. en)
PRESSE 356

# EU maritime security strategy approved

On the initiative of the Hellenic Presidency, the Council today endorsed an EU maritime security strategy as a framework for effectively and comprehensively addressing the EU's maritime security challenges.

The objective is to secure the EU's maritime security interests against risks and threats in the global maritime domain, such as cross-border and organised crime, threats to freedom of navigation, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or environmental risks. The strategy covers both internal and external aspects of the Union's maritime security in a cross-sectorial and comprehensive approach.

*"I wholeheartedly welcome the adoption of the EU Maritime Security Strategy, which was one of the Hellenic Presidency's key priorities, This Strategy constitutes a significant step forward in safeguarding the EU's maritime security interests against a plethora of risks and threats in the global maritime domain, in accordance with the fundamental values and principles of the EU, including respect for international law and, in particular, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,* said Greek Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Venizelos following the approval of the EU maritime security strategy.

EU High Representative Catherine Ashton said: *"This strategy will help us better promote our maritime security interests and assume our global responsibilities. Working across its comprehensive approach, and together with its international partners, the EU has a lot to offer; from political and economic engagement to naval operations, we can really make the difference, as demonstrated by our highly successful counter-piracy operation EUNAVFOR Operation ATALANTA in the Western Indian Ocean. Building on our successes, the strategy is the basis for concrete actions. We are committed to implement it and work towards a concise action plan to do so".*

# P R E S S

Action will be stepped up in five areas: intensified EU external action will involve a more effective use of all instruments at its disposal, including political dialogue, development aid to support to capacity building. Maritime awareness and surveillance will also be worked through the development of a common information sharing environment. In addition, capability development should be reinforced, for instance by promoting pooling and sharing initiatives and supporting the development of dual-use technologies. In addition, risk management, protection of critical maritime infrastructure and crisis response will be bolstered with a view to achieving a common risk analysis. Lastly, maritime security research and training will be strengthened.

*"My goal is to rekindle the maritime economy",* said Maria Damanaki, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, *"but that goes hand in hand with security: no businessman will invest on a maritime activity if off-shore installations are not safe or trade routes are not secure. And today's threats call for a coordinated response. This strategy is lean, smart and comprehensive; it allows our nations to pool resources, be cost efficient and work hand in hand. But our work does not stop here. The next crucial step is to develop concrete actions and projects together, and I look forward to it. This is not only a responsibility which we cannot shirk but is also what the EU model is all about."*

The guiding principles of this strategy are its cross-sectorial approach; rules-based governance of the global maritime domain; respect for existing instruments and competences, as well as maritime multilateralism.

By the end of 2014, a rolling action plan will be developed to implement the strategy.

*See also*: EU integrated approach to global maritime security, 6 March 2014

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