

Information Bulletin June 2023



EMASoH in June – Bottom Lines Up Front

- EMASoH countries condemn the seizure and detention by Iran of the Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker *Advantage Sweet* in the Gulf of Oman and the Panama-flagged oil tanker *Niovi* in the Strait of Hormuz.
- Because the staff of operation AGENOR is afloat on board the flagship ITS Luigi Rizzo, you can reach us by telephone via +39 0187024, DIAL 2 FOR ENGLISH and press: 7566903.
- **The Italian Rear Admiral Mauro Panebianco takes the command of operation AGENOR.**
- The 10th rotation, under Rear Admiral Renaud Flamant, AGENOR has bolstered maritime security in the vital Strait of Hormuz and surrounding areas.
- On the 14th of June we hosted 9 European Ambassadors in Muscat, where the Force Commander presented our objectives, goals and our way ahead.

Change of Command military operation AGENOR

On the 9th of June 2023, under the authority of the French Operation Commander Rear Admiral (2 star) Emmanuel Slaars, Italian Rear Admiral (1 star) Mauro Panebianco received the Force Command from the Belgian Rear Admiral (1 star) Renaud Flamant, who served as the Force Commander of operation AGENOR since the end of January 2023.

EMASoH consists of a diplomatic and a military pillar named AGENOR, which was launched on January 20th, 2020 by a joint European declaration of support. Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Norway are currently part of EMASoH. Our aim is to reassure maritime merchant operators, by promoting a safe navigational environment, to contribute to de-escalation and to facilitate an inclusive regional dialogue in the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf Region.



Figure 1: Leaving Force Commander Renaud Flamant addresses his staff in his speech.

“I have been very privileged and honored to assume tactical command of this operation with a professional team and I am handing them over to Rear Admiral Mauro Panebianco, wishing him to bring AGENOR to even higher standards” said Rear Admiral Renaud Flamant. *“This 10th rotation was characterized by rising tensions within the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf Area, reaching a climax with the seizures of two oil tankers five weeks ago. Within that volatile security environment, the EMASoH operation “AGENOR” kept its de-escalatory posture. The Force HQ and the assets at sea and in the air provided on daily base maritime awareness and reassurance towards merchant shipping”*

Rear Admiral Panebianco, the new Force Commander said: *“It’s a great honor to have been assigned as Force Commander of operation AGENOR. We will continue to provide EMASoH nations and shipping stakeholders with an autonomous situational awareness. I intend to continue, like my predecessors, stating that it is essential that operation AGENOR remains characterized by a de-escalatory posture, keeping the operation visible and holding a clear and predictable profile.”*



Figure 2: Rear Admiral Mauro Panebianco (left) receives the command from the Operation Commander Vice Admiral Emmanuel Slaars.

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10th rotation characteristics

Under Rear Admiral Renaud Flamant's command, around 130 radio-communication calls were made, allowing important security information exchange and coordination with commercial vessels. These calls played a crucial role in reassuring merchant vessels in the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf area. The airborne operations provided enhanced surveillance capabilities, in order to establish a recognized maritime picture. Additionally, Operation AGENOR conducted more than 40 accompaniments of merchant vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. These accompaniments demonstrated the mission's commitment to ensuring safe navigation. These statistics highlight the dedication, the operational efficiency, and the substantial contribution of the assets of the AGENOR nations. Through collective effort, AGENOR has bolstered maritime security in the vital Strait of Hormuz and surrounding areas.

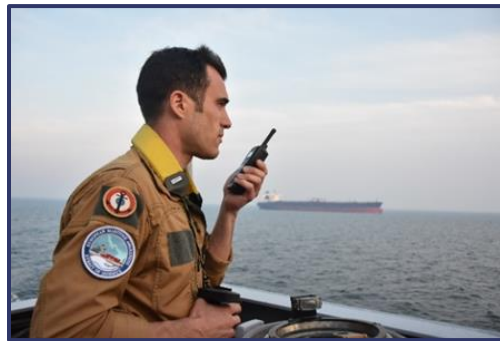


Figure 3: A French sailor making a radio call to a merchant vessel in the Gulf region.

Ambassadors event on board the *Rizzo* in Muscat

On the Italian frigate *Luigi Rizzo*, we had the opportunity to host Ambassadors and high representatives of EU in Muscat. It is of great importance to share our knowledge with regional and European actors. We presented our objectives, goals and our way ahead. The head of the Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping joined the



Figure 5: The Ambassadors of Austria, Romania, Hungary, France and the Netherlands

Force Commander in presenting the particularities of the white shipping and gave an overview of the ships that are of

interests for our operation as well as the type of monitoring we do at EMASoH. The Ambassadors of Italy, France, The Netherlands, Austria, Cyprus, Romania and Hungary and the Defence Attachés of Italy, France and Spain attended the presentation. This presentation helped to significantly raise the awareness and the understanding of the operation.



Figure 4: The Force Commander (left) receives the Spanish Defense Attaché COL JOSE-MARIA BONASTRE



Figure 6: French frigate FS *Surcouf* leaving the port of Muscat after waving goodbye to ITS *Luigi Rizzo*



Figure 7: Invitees of the ambassador's event gathered on the bridge of ITS *Luigi Rizzo*

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Assets in operation AGENOR

In April French and Italian frigates contributed to operation AGENOR. The French La Fayette Class frigate *Surcouf* and Italian FREMM class *Luigi Rizzo* set sail in the Gulf region and Strait of Hormuz. They engaged in exercises and monitored merchant vessels, contributing to maritime security in the region. The deployment of the French and Italian assets emphasizes the important commitment of both countries to contribute to maritime security in the Gulf region.

After the seizures of the tankers in the Gulf Area, we increased our presence in the Strait of Hormuz. When another merchant vessel was presumably harassed, both *Surcouf* and *Rizzo* kept a strategic watch on merchant vessels transiting the Strait.



Figure 7: the FS *Surcouf* performing a transit with a merchant vessel in the Strait of Hormuz

Website EMASoH/AGENOR

EMASoH/AGENOR now has its very own website. Explore our website where you can find all information combined, including our Voluntary Reporting Scheme, newsletters, press releases and pictures. The website will be continuously updated in the future.

Voluntary Reporting Scheme

We have an average of 18 ships reporting each day in the EMASoH Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA).

Shipping companies are invited to participate to our Voluntary Reporting Scheme. Voluntary reporting improves the cooperation and guidance that EMASoH can provide to those ships. Voluntary reported ships are also prioritised for possible accompaniments with EMASoH's naval assets and reassuring calls with naval and aerial assets. Before entering the Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA), 48 hours in advance, or as soon as possible:

- ✓ **inform** EMASoH about the timing of your intended entry and exit of the VRA;
- ✓ **confirm** the planning 6 hours before entering and share possible changes to the journey planning;
- ✓ **report** any suspicious behaviour to the coast guard of the coastal state and to EMASoH.

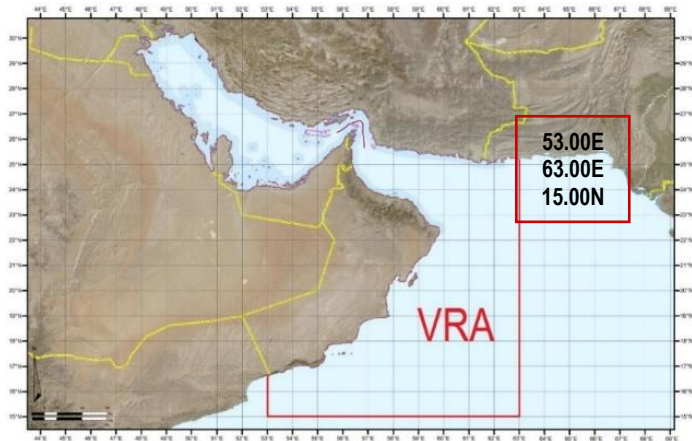


Figure 8: The EMASoH Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA)

Voluntary reporting to EMASoH via ctf474-emasoh.vra.fct@def.gouv.fr or phone +39 0187024 (DAIL 2 FOR ENGLISH) 7566903

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