



PRESS RELEASE 04/2023

Abu Dhabi, UAE, 9th of June 2023

ITALY TAKES THE COMMAND OF THE TASK FORCE AGENOR

Abu Dhabi, UAE – June 9th 2023, the European-led Maritime Awareness mission in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASoH) has a new Force Commander. Under the authority of the Operation Commander French Vice Admiral Emmanuel Slaars, Italian Rear Admiral Mauro Panebianco received the Force Command from the Belgian Rear Admiral Renaud Flamant, who served as the Force Commander of operation AGENOR since the end of January 2022.

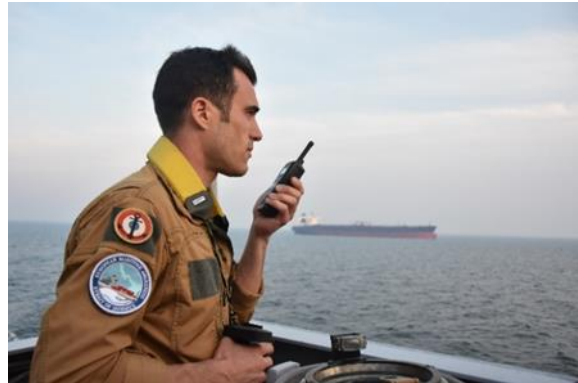
EMASoH consists of both a diplomatic and a military pillar called AGENOR, which was launched on January 20th, 2020 by a joint European declaration of support. Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Norway are currently part of EMASoH. Our aim is to reassure maritime 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 Gulf Region.

“I have been very privileged and honored to assume the 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 the merchant shipping”

After four months, operation AGENOR has concluded this rotation with commendable achievements. The Force Headquarter, along with its dedicated assets, has effectively contributed to maritime security and freedom of navigation in the Gulf region. The assets were consisting of 3 French and 2 Italian frigates, 3 French maritime patrol aircraft crews, an Italian drone and Belgian satellite imagery. In total, more than 550 men and women of seven different nations carried out their duties during this rotation. Their professionalism and expertise greatly contributed to the success of the mission.

Rear Admiral Panebianco, the new Force Commander: *“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.*

This 10th rotation around 130 radio communication calls were made, allowing important security information exchange and coordination with the commercial shipping. 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.

The diplomatic track of EMASoH is led by the Danish Ambassador Jakob Brix Tange: *“Rear Admiral Renaud Flamant has served as Force Commander at an important time in EMASoH’s history. Not only has he excelled in his active role of increasing understanding and knowledge of the mission, he has also engaged constructively in the discussions on the future European presence in the region; true to the mission’s objectives. I am looking forward to build on these results continuing the direct and close coordination between the two pillars of EMASoH with Rear Admiral Mauro Panebianco.”*

During the Change of Command ceremony today, the outgoing Belgian commander and team received the French Médaille Commémorative Française and Belgian Medal for International Operations in recognition of their service.

Find below pictures of the Change of Command Ceremony that was held the 9th of May 2023.

For more information:

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Figure 1: Leaving Force Commander Rear Admiral Renaud Flamant decorated with the French Commemorative Medal engraved with "Hormuz".



Figure 2: Rear Admiral Renaud Flamant addressing the staff of the Force Headquarters, who received the Belgian and French commemorative medals in the ceremony.



Figure 3: The new Force Commander Rear Admiral Mauro Panebianco receiving the tactical command of Task Force AGENOR from the Operation Commander Vice Admiral Emmanuel Slaars.