

Information Bulletin October 2022



Naval diplomacy



Following the diplomatic receptions in Muscat and in the port visits in Doha and Dubai in September 2022, Operation AGENOR continued the naval diplomacy endeavour in the Gulf region. On the 5th October 2022 in Manama, in the Kingdom of Bahrain, a diplomatic reception was held on board Italian Ship Thaon di Revel, organised by the Ambassador of Italy to Bahrain, Paola Amadei. An additional international event was held in Kuwait City, on the 10th October 2022 by the Italian Ambassador to Kuwait, Carlo Baldocci. The flagship of Operation AGENOR made a further port call at Dubai (United Arab Emirates). To consolidate regional cooperation, the Italian Ship sailed together with regional navies

several times, such as the Royal Navy of Oman on 20th September, and Kuwait Naval Force on the 12th of October.

Since the multinational European staff of the Force Headquarters embarked on the flagship of the mission and went afloat, three diplomatic receptions and five port calls were made. Naval diplomacy is an important means to achieve the reduction of tensions in the maritime domain, indeed, it enables the European initiative to engage in inclusive trans-regional dialogue and to strengthen diplomatic and military relationships with actors in the region, testifying the inclusive nature of EMASoH.



In October, the multinational European staff of Operation AGENOR has also been involved in inclusive regional dialogue during the Maritime Security Conference in Manama (3-6 October). Leaders from 40 navies and coast guards attended this annual maritime security conference to discuss future partnership opportunities and initiatives. Senior National Representatives of the Force Headquarter and several other staff members of CTF 474 were present.

Opportunities for the future



The EMASoH and EUNAVFOR SOMALIA are exploring possible future cooperation between their respective maritime operations. On the 29th of October, Spanish Vice-Admiral José Nùnez Torrente, Commander of Operation ATALANTA, together with the Senior Civilian Representative of the diplomatic component of EMASoH, Danish Ambassador Jakob Brix Tange, brought a visit to the EMASoH warship ITS navy vessel Thaon di Revel. They were invited by Rear Admiral Emmanuel Slaars, Commander of Operation AGENOR. During this visit the authorities of these two maritime security missions, operating in the western Indian Ocean, have been discussing issues of common interest.

New ways of future cooperation between AGENOR and ATALANTA were highlighted, such as, Information exchange, optimising the use of maritime (naval and air) assets and carrying out joint and combined activities.

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AIS Data

AIS is one of the technical means supporting the capability to maintain a good picture of shipping in the area, as all ships above threshold tonnage are required to transmit their identifying data at all times, whether underway or at anchor. While this tool supports safety and security of navigation, we do observe instances where ships turn off their AIS transponders in the area, including when passing through the Strait of Hormuz. This practice not only makes the detailed monitoring of ships more challenging, but also may contribute to safety threats for ships sailing in the area, as switching off AIS highly likely draws the attention rather than dissimulate. We recommend strict adherence to the IMO guidelines with respect to the use of AIS by ships.

EMASoH and the European Union, common interests

The analyse of the AIS data for the EMASoH shipping of interest has been extended to the interest of the whole European Union (flag and country of financial benefit). It appears that about three quarters of the EU and EMASoH interests are common; this means that EMASoH looks after almost 85% of the EU interests (with the addition of Norway) in the area of the Voluntary Reporting Scheme.

The Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, an area getting quieter



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Throughout the month of September, no incident has been reported. The analyses of “patterns of life” we hold on a permanent basis show unmistakably that the shipping sails more and more through the Tunb Traffic Separation Schemes (TSS) located west of the Strait of Hormuz along the Tunb islands. At EMASoH we consider this as a sort of “risk level feeling indicator”: all other things remaining, to our assessment, the more these TSS are used the less the seamen feel at risk. Based on the passages of ships flying EMASoH flags, approximately two third of the traffic having the choice would go for the transit through the Tunb TSS option. This is significantly more than what it used to be in the recent past. This observation has to be correlated to the absence of incident recorded.

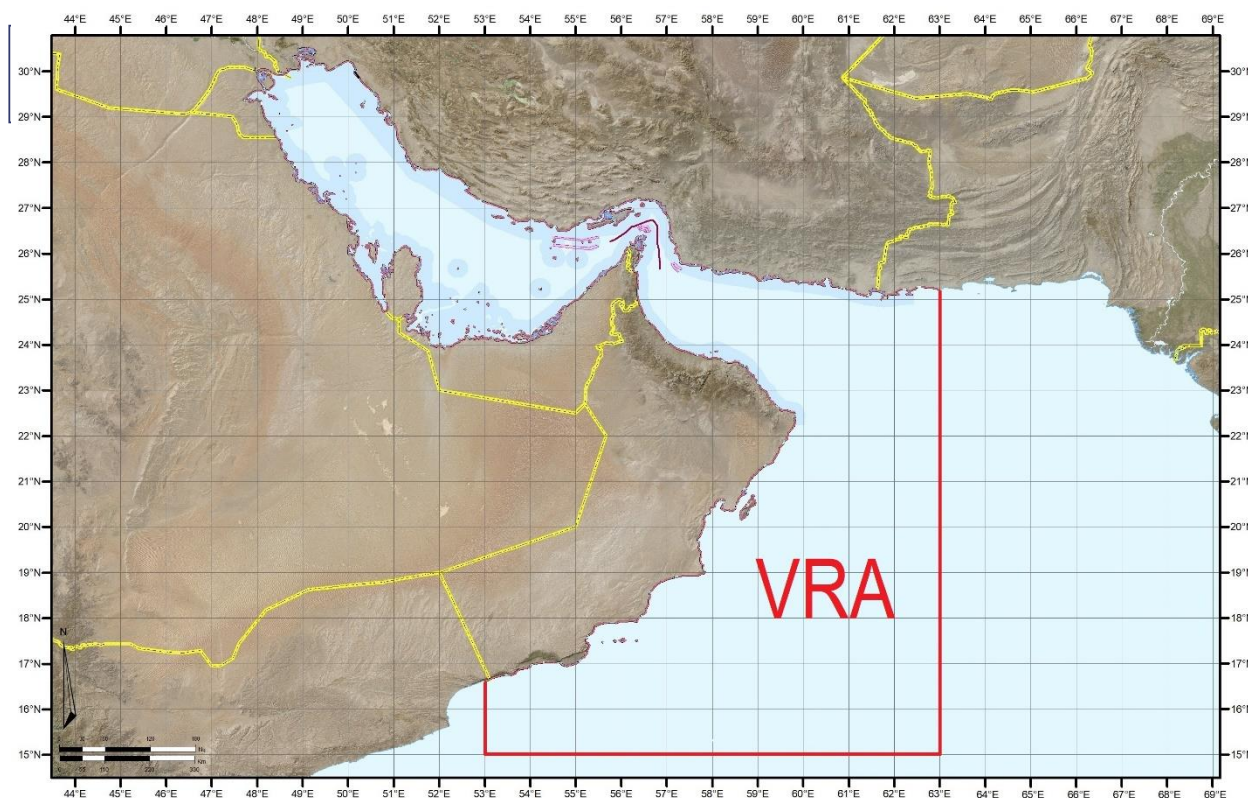
Voluntary Reporting Scheme

Shipping operators are invited to participate to a Voluntary Reporting Scheme. Voluntary reporting improves the cooperation and guidance EMASoH can provide to ships on the basis of informing, reassuring, and promoting the freedom of navigation. Voluntary reported ships are also prioritised for possible accompaniments with EMASoH's naval assets and reassuring EMMA calls with naval and aerial assets.

Before entering the Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA), 48 hours in advance, or as soon as possible:

- ✓ **Inform** EMASoH of the timing of their intended entry and exit VRA;
- ✓ **Confirmation** of the planning 6 hours before entering and possible changes to their journey planning;
- ✓ **Report** any suspicious behaviour to the coast guard of the coastal state and to EMASoH.

Reporting to EMASoH is possible via ctf474-emasoh.vra.fct@def.gouv.fr or phone **+971 265 74 278**.
Standard reporting formats are available and will be accessible in the future via the EMASoH website.



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