



EMASoH in November – new naval asset

November has been an eventful month for EMASoH (European-led Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz). First of all a new naval asset arrived: The French Navy frigate Aconit. In direct support of EMASoH, the Aconit has been sailing in the Gulf Region enhancing the maritime situational awareness. During its journey several joint sea activities with regional navies were performed (Oman, United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain). Secondly, the Operation AGENOR staff (AGENOR: the military pillar of EMASoH), moved from the Italian navy ship Thaon di Revel back to the Force Headquarters in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Thirdly, November was a month with several visits by representatives and diplomatic activities for EMASoH, further described in this edition of the Bulletin.



Medal Parade with chief of the Italian Navy



On the 7th of November a medal parade took place on the Italian Navy ship Thaon di Revel. The Italian chief of the navy (Vice-Admiral Enrico Credendino) visited the ceremony and was accompanied by the Operational Commander (Rear Admiral Emmanuel Slaars) and Force Commander (Rear Admiral Stefano Costantino) of Operation AGENOR. During the ceremony, Italian and French decorations were awarded to EMASoH military personnel. These decorations are rewarded in order to recognize their efforts and achievements with the goal of contributing to a secure and safe passage of merchant vessels through the Strait of Hormuz, supporting the freedom of navigation principle for global and shared benefit. The ceremony was held with both the Thaon di Revel and the French Navy frigate Aconit in port.

The release of two Greek Ships by Iran

In the week of 18 November, the news reached EMASoH that the Greek tankers PRUDENT WARRIOR and DELTA POSEIDON, together with their crew members, were to be released by Iran. EMASoH saw the need to respond to this event with a joint statement by the EMASoH countries. The Statement has been included in this Monthly Bulletin at the beginning of the following page.

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Joint Statement by the EMASoH participating countries on the release of two Greek ships by Iran

“The countries participating in the European-led Maritime Awareness Mission in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASoH), Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, and Portugal, took note of the release on 16-11-2022 by the Iranian authorities of the previously seized Greek ships, “PRUDENT WARRIOR” and “DELTA POSEIDON”, along with their crews and cargoes. The ships had been detained since 27 May, an incident the EMASOH participating countries had condemned in their Joint Statement dated 7 June.

The EMASoH partners take this opportunity to emphasize once again the utmost importance of maritime security and freedom of navigation in one of the world’s most important international straits crucial to international stability and free trans-regional trade. EMASoH remains committed to its main goal: the de-escalation of tensions in the region with a neutral and constructive approach in pursuit of this mission’s objectives.”

Naval diplomacy

Operation AGENOR continued their diplomatic endeavors in November. Several events took place in order to stimulate the dialogue between the entire maritime cluster. On the 7th of November a diplomatic reception was held on the Italian navy ship Thaon di Revel. During the event, Claudio Ramunno, Deputy Ambassador of Italy in the United Arab Emirates, addressed the attendees and encouraged the cause of EMASoH: contributing to security and freedom of navigation in the Gulf region. The Chief of the Italian Navy, Vice-Admiral Enrico Credendino, Rear Admiral Emmanuel and Rear Admiral Stefano Costantino (last two of Operation AGENOR) were also present.



The week after the reception, on the 16th of November EMASoH staff members were welcomed on board of the AIDAcosma, a 337 meter long cruise ship. The AIDAcosma visited the port of Abu Dhabi and currently sails in the Gulf Region. During the visit, a presentation about the mission of EMASoH was given to the commander and officers of the AIDAcosma. The crew of the AIDAcosma and EMASoH staff members were able to share knowledge and learn from each other. After this, the EMASoH staff was given the opportunity to see different aspects of the ship.

In November, the EMASoH Staff has also been invited to an event of the Italian Embassy in the UAE in order to celebrate the Italian National Armed Forces day. At the event, the Italian Ambassador to the UAE and Defence Attaché gave speeches and underlined the military efforts of Italy at the international level, including the contribution to EMASoH. Italy has indeed been strongly involved in EMASoH over the last year. In 2022, the Italian Navy vessel Thaon di Revel has been the Flagship of Operation AGENOR and the Force Commander of Operation AGENOR, Rear Admiral Costantino, is also Italian.



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EMASoH is keen on having a good relationship with all regional and Gulf Nations and encourages shared activities at sea like these.

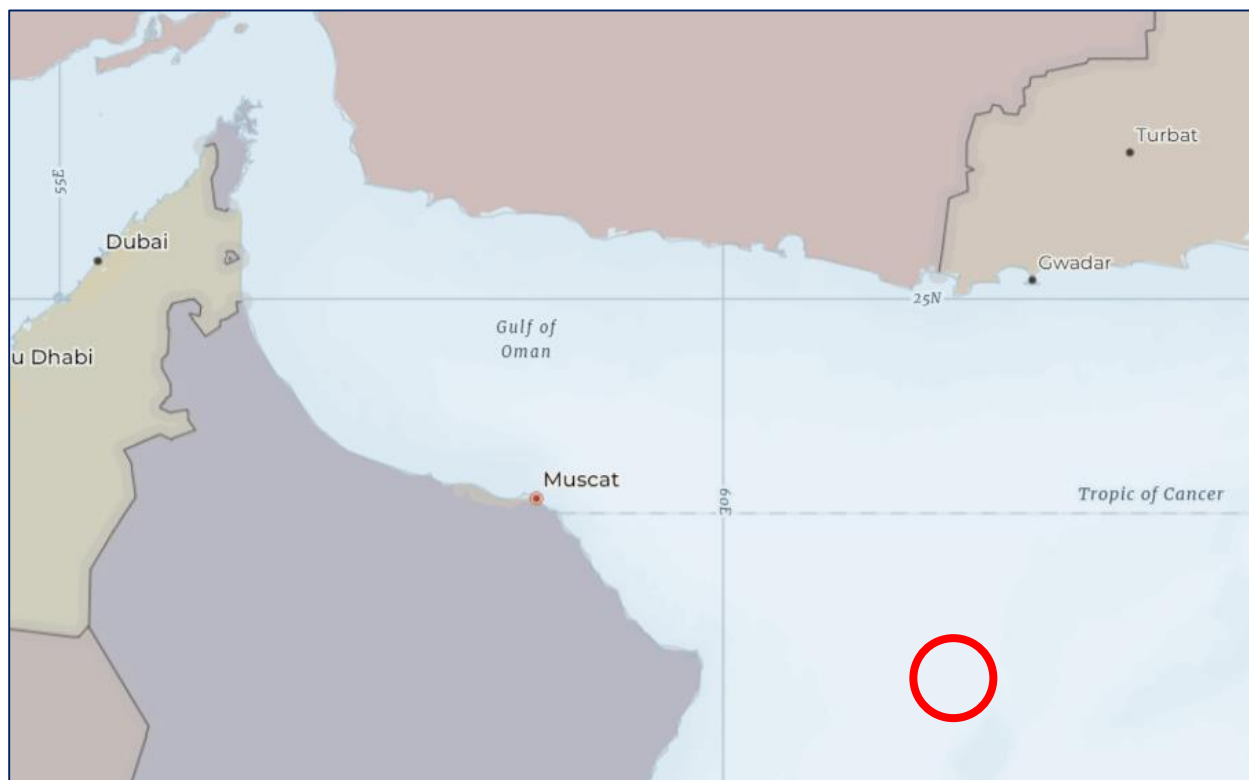
Furthermore, November was a month of interaction with navies of different Gulf states. The French Frigate Aconit conducted joint activities at sea with the RNOV Al Seeb (Oman), the FFGH Murayjib (UAE) and the Al Muharraq (Bahrain). The activities included maneuvering together, sailing together and a damage scenario drill.



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.

Pacific Zircon incident



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On the 15th of November, the Merchant Tanker (M/T) Pacific Zircon was struck by a air drone while in passage (southbound of the shore of Oman) in the northern Indian Ocean region. Shortly after it was reported the crew was safe and the vessel's hull sustained minor damage, but there was no cargo spillage. The Pacific Zircon is operated by Singapore-based Eastern Pacific Shipping.

GPS inconsistency reported in the strait of Hormuz

Over the last couple of weeks, EMASoH HQ has received a few reports from merchant vessels about inconsistent GPS data in the area around the Strait of Hormuz. We and our partners in the area would like to, once again, reassure the merchant companies and vessels about the fact that we are monitoring the situation and that we are investigating the reports.

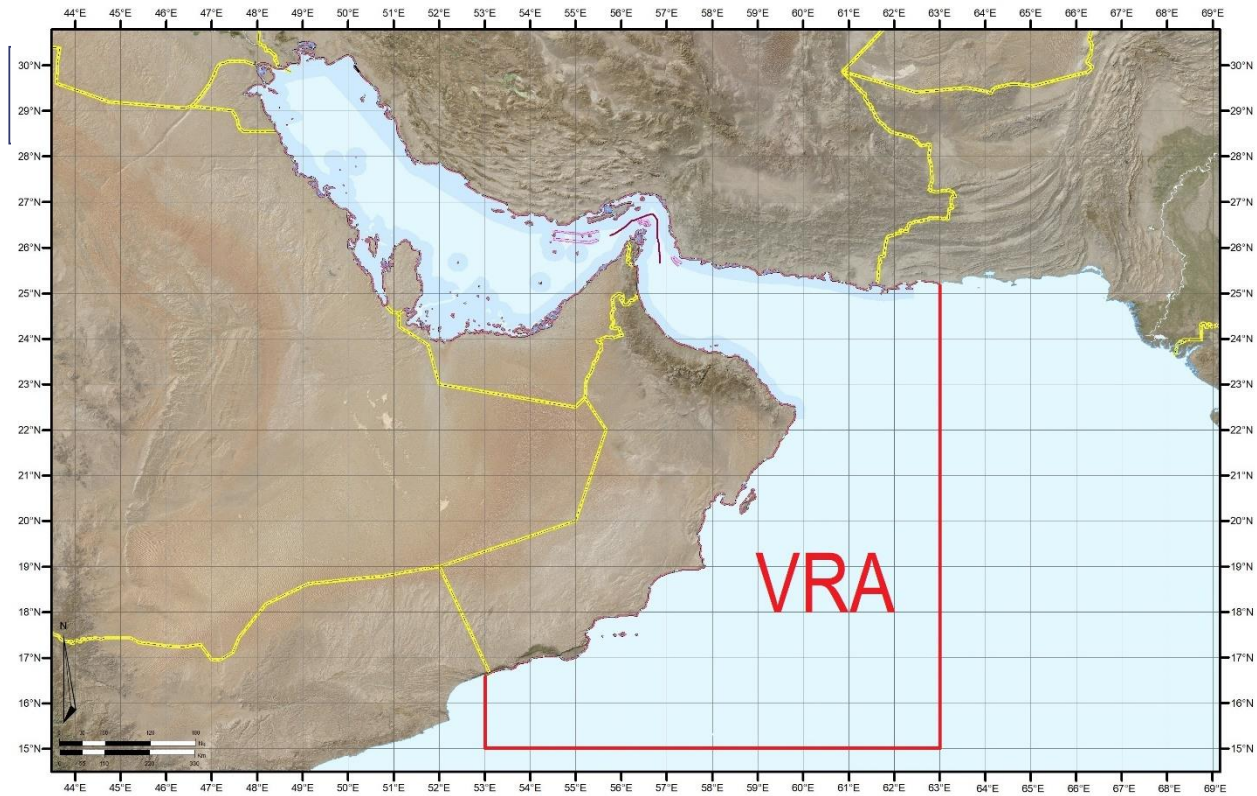
Voluntary Reporting Scheme

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;
- ✓ **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.

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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