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Reply

(19.7.2021)

Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/472[[1]](#footnote-1) of 31 March 2021 established and launched Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI, setting out the mandate for the EU military operation in the Mediterranean, aimed at contributing to the prevention of arms trafficking in accordance with UNSCR 1970 (2011) and subsequent resolutions on the arms embargo on Libya, including UNSCR 2292 (2016) and UNSCR 2578 (2021). Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/542[[2]](#footnote-2) of 26 March 2021 extended the mandate of EUNAVFOR MED IRINI until 31 March 2023.

As a secondary task, and in accordance with UNSCR 2240 (2015), EUNAVFOR MED IRINI supports the detection and monitoring of human smuggling and trafficking networks through information-gathering and patrolling carried out by aerial assets above the high seas, in the agreed Area of Operation, and may, in accordance with applicable law, collect and store data on human smuggling and trafficking, including crimes relevant to the security of the operation, which it may transmit to the relevant law enforcement authorities of Member States and to competent Union bodies.

EUNAVFOR MED IRINI hosts a Crime Information Cell (CIC) composed of staff of relevant law enforcement authorities of Member States, in order to facilitate the receipt, collection and transmission of information, including data on human smuggling and trafficking, as well as crimes relevant to the security of the operation. The processing of personal data in this context is carried out in accordance with applicable law.

In carrying out this secondary task, Operation IRINI has detected eight Safety Of Life At Sea (SOLAS) events in the Libyan Search and Rescue (SAR) Region in 2020. Since 21 July 2020, IRINI naval assets have received no distress calls.

According to the SOLAS and SAR International Conventions, information or sightings regarding distress situations/potential distress situations at sea gained by ENFM IRINI aerial assets operating within the mandated Area of Operation are to be shared with all competent Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres (MRCCs) of the area, namely the Italian, Maltese and Tunisian MRCCs, as well as the Libyan MRCC/JRCC, operated by the Libyan Coastguard and Navy (LCG&N).

The Council is not in a position to comment on the operational performance of the search and rescue operations conducted by the MRCCs of Member States or third States.

1. Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/472 of 31 March 2020 on a European Union military operation in the Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI), OJ L 101, 1.4.2020, p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/542 of 26 March 2021 amending Decision (CFSP) 2020/472 on the European Union military operation in the Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI), OJ L 108, 29.3.2021, p. 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)