Q&A's for the
European Union Maritime Security Strategy and Action Plan

Q: Why is maritime security important?
A: EU coastal regions border several main maritime basins: the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the North-East Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, and outermost regions. EU Member States are responsible for the control of a coastline over 90,000 kilometres in length. Of the 28 Member States, 23 are coastal states and 26 are Flag States. Maritime transport provides the main mode for EU imports and exports to the rest of the world. In fact, 90% of the EU's external trade and 40% of its internal trade is transported by sea. Hence, secure and safe seas are also very important for free commerce and trade, EU economy and living standards. Here are more figures:

- Member States together have more than 1200 commercial ports; more than 8,100 flagged vessels (over 500 GT); 4300 registered maritime companies; there are 764 big ports and more than 3800 port facilities. There are 80 Registered Security Operators appointed by the MS;
- European ship owners manage 30% of the world's vessels and 35% of world shipping tonnage - inter alia 55% of container vessels and 35% of tankers, representing 42% of the value of global seaborne trade;
- More than 400 million passengers pass through EU ports each year;
- Over 20% of world tonnage is registered under EU Member States flag and over 40 % of world fleet is controlled by EU companies;
- There are 22 Fisheries partnership agreements (FPAs) with third countries;
- EU fishing fleet in 2011 - 83 014 vessels with gross tonnage 1 696 175, the European fleet operates world-wide.

But this is not all, the EU actively contributes to safe and secure seas in different parts of the globe, using EU’s existing instruments (as the Instrument Contributing for Peace and Stability) and EU policies (such as the Common Security and Defence Policy).

Q: When was the 'European Union Maritime Security Strategy' adopted and who agreed to it?
A: The Council adopted the 'European Union Maritime Security Strategy' on 24 June 2014 and its Action plan on 16 December 2014. These are political documents agreed upon by consensus with the full support of the European Commission, the European External Action Service and the European Council with its 28 Member States. The Strategy and Action plan was developed following a call by the European Council in December, 2013 for "an EU Maritime Security Strategy by June 2014, on the basis of a Joint Communication from the Commission and the High Representative, taking into account the opinions of the Member States". This Joint Communication was presented on 6 March 2013.

Q: What is the purpose of the European Union Maritime Security Strategy?
A: The EU Maritime Security Strategy provides a shared strategic framework for relevant authorities at national and European levels to develop further their specific maritime security policies. The aim of the Strategy is to identify the EU's strategic maritime security interests in the global maritime domain, to strengthen the link between internal and
external security aspects of the maritime security policies of the EU, and promote civil and military cooperation.

**Q: What are the guiding principles and key objectives of the European Union Maritime Security Strategy?**

A: The 'European Union Maritime Security Strategy' identifies four guiding principles: (1) a cross-sectoral approach (i.e. a comprehensive approach); (2) functional integrity (which means there are no changes in existing mandates or competences, and no transfer of sovereignty from Member States to EU Institutions); (3) maritime multilateralism (effective cooperation with partner countries and organisations); (4) respect for rules and principles (the EU is a community of values, the maritime strategy underlines or manifests these values in the maritime domain, e.g. human rights, rules-based good governance).

**Q: What does 'cross-sectoral' actually mean in practice?**

A: The term 'cross-sectoral' refers to actions or cooperation between different marine or maritime functions and/or policy sectors. Modern maritime risks and threats are multifaceted and can have implications for many different sectors, requiring the coordination of different policies and instruments.

The 'cross-sectoral' approach to maritime security is the crucial characteristic of the 'European Union Maritime Security Strategy'. It is about bringing the different policy actors together within a shared policy framework that allows for a common understanding of the problem and the required response. Some of the most evident sectors are maritime safety, marine environment protection, fisheries control, customs, border control, law enforcement, defence, research and development and others. A 'joined up' approach to maritime security by making these sectors work better together, can make the EU's security policy more coherent, effective and cost efficient.

**Q: Why is an Action Plan necessary? How will it be implemented?**

The European Union Maritime security Strategy is first and foremost a political strategic document which spells out the main areas for further work. The EU wants its strategies to be actionable, that is, that they can be translated into concrete and specific action. For the European Union Maritime security Strategy to be actionable, the Action Plan that sets out 130 actions to translate the ideas and ambitions of the Strategy into action.

The Action Plan is a 'rolling' Action Plan with a delivery horizon of five years, which means that it can be updated as we go. The Action Plan is developed by all stakeholders (Member States, Commission and EEAS) and is structured around five thematic areas: (1) External relations and cooperation; (2) Information sharing; (3) Capability development; (4) Risk management and (5) Research and training.

**Q: What will change with this Action Plan?**

A: The general ambition laid down in the Action Plan is that maritime authorities in the EU (civil and military) will be able to work much more closely together and share information and resources with each other than beforehand. These authorities could for example share surveillance information with each other instead of collecting them each separately and also share resources (radar stations, patrol vessels, etc.) instead of having resources. In fact, by turning towards an approach of multiuse or dual use of these resources, these authorities can both collectively become more efficient and cost efficient at the same time.
In terms of external action, the Action Plan means that the EU is promoting further cooperation and identifying commonalities with international partners, including International Organizations (such as the UN and NATO) and third countries in the field of maritime security.

This will entail, for example, that the EU will further include maritime security in bilateral and international meeting agendas; promote the respect for International Law, in particular UNCLOS (United Nations Convention in the Law of the Sea); mainstream maritime security interests and responsibilities in geographical strategies; build-upon the lessons learned from the Horn of Africa and the ongoing work in the Gulf of Guinea and other parts of the globe, where the EU has specific external maritime security related interests and actions in place.

The Action Plan will also further develop a common maritime awareness picture, for example, by promoting coordination amongst EU agencies, such as EMSA, EFCA, FRONTEX, EDA and EUROPOL, beyond what is already good practice today, thus reinforcing inter-agency cooperation and continue supporting Member States in maritime surveillance.

Another key area foreseen in the Action Plan is exercises and training, for example, inter agency training or exercises with third States and International Organizations in the field of maritime security will be promoted.

Moreover, the Action Plan also foresees capability development, for example ensuring maximised co-ordination between the European Defence Agency and the outcome of civil research programmes in the areas of dual use technologies and dual use capabilities.

The last key area foreseen in the Action Plan is risk management, protection of critical maritime infrastructure and crisis response, which for example is seeking to pursue a shared and comprehensive approach to maritime security risk management.

Q: Are some actions more important than others?
A: The Action Plan does not prioritize. What we have done however is to identify the delivery horizon for each sub-action: short, medium or long term.

Q: Isn’t work already ongoing on some of the areas identified in the Action Plan? How will that be addressed? Isn’t there a risk of duplication with existing activities?
A: Most of the actions are already ongoing activities and the intent is to avoid duplication and seek synergies. The added value will be to see how these ongoing activities relate to similar activities of other sectors in order to possibly strengthen the cross-sectoral dimension of some actions. For example, we can see that the ongoing work to combat illegal (IUU) fishing can benefit from the work of other sectors or from regional strategies in order to deal with some of the root causes. Joint exercises, in maritime security, for example, are both relevant in an external action context and in an interagency training context.

Q: What are ongoing EU projects in the field of maritime security?
The Action Plan builds upon the existing work of the EU institutions and EU Member States. In fact, many of the actions foreseen in the Action Plan are based on ongoing projects and already existing achievements in EU legislation. Some examples are:
• The legislative framework on border management, the so-called Schengen acquis, including the exchange of information system between border control authorities under the EUROSUR Regulation.

• The legislative framework managing maritime transport issues, including Regulation (EC) No 725/2004 on enhancing ship and port facility security, Directive 2005/65/EC on enhancing port security and the Union Information exchange system introduced under Directive 2010/65/EU. The main objective of Regulation 725/2004 is to implement Union measures aimed at enhancing the security of ships through measures of preventive nature used in international trade and associated port facilities in the face of threats of international unlawful acts (including piracy and armed robbery at sea). Directive 2005/65/EC complements the security measures introduced by Regulation (EC) 725/2004 by making an entire port subject to a security regime. In order to obtain maximum protection for maritime and port activities, measures should be taken that cover all ports within a perimeter defined by the Member State in question, thereby ensuring that security measures taken in accordance with the Regulation benefit from enhanced security within the areas of port activity. The objective of the Union information exchange system is to enhance information exchange between different maritime sectors.

• The legislative framework combatting Illegal Unreported and Unregulated fisheries (IUU).

• The EU contributes to enhance maritime security and safety through information sharing and capacity building efforts under the Critical Maritime Routes (CMR) Programme (ICPS – Long Term Component). Under the CMR there are four successful ongoing projects in the Indian Ocean (CRIMARIO, CRIMSON, MARSIC, and CRIMLEA) and one in the Gulf of Guinea (CRIMARIO).

• Under the EDF, the MASE (Maritime Security) Programme, the EU supports the implementation of Eastern and Southern Africa Indian Ocean Regional Strategy and Action Plan, which was adopted in October 2010 in Mauritius to promote maritime security and strengthen regional capacity building.

• In the framework of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), the EU is also actively contributing through maritime security and regional capacity building efforts in the Horn of Africa and the Wider Indian Ocean. In fact, Operation ATALANTA and EUCAPNESTOR as key features of EU’s comprehensive approach to the Horn of Africa;

• The EU has proven experience in coordination and countering piracy: e.g. Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) and current (2014) Chairmanship of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Shore of Somalia (CGPCS);

• Works is already ongoing to enhance information exchange between maritime surveillance authorities. The Commission has in 8 July 2014 presented the current state of play and future perspectives for a Common information sharing environment for the EU maritime domain (Maritime CISE);

• There is ongoing work in integrated maritime surveillance and management of EU external borders. Existing cooperation in the Eurosur framework ensures cooperation in order to improve situational awareness and increase reaction capability at the external border.
Q: What does this mean for our cooperation with NATO?

A: Cooperation and strengthening our coordination with NATO is an important political objective for the EU. The Action Plan identifies actions that aim to strengthen the EU-NATO relationship in the maritime domain. Actions include taking stock of what is already a good practice today, avoiding unnecessary duplication and maximizing the use of available mechanisms and capabilities.

Q: Is the deployment of other naval missions similar to EUNAVFOR Operation ATALANTA foreseen?

A: The use of all possible tools and instruments is considered when addressing a maritime security challenge. Each case requires a full evaluation of the situation in order to identify the best action. In the case of the piracy attacks off the coast of Somalia, which gravely endanger shipping routes in the Gulf of Aden, the deployment of international naval forces was deemed necessary as local capacities to ensure maritime security were not available.

Q: Is the Action Plan also addressing irregular migration?

A: The Action Plan aims for a cross-sectoral approach and to bring together the internal and external aspects of maritime security. It will help ensure consistency between existing and future activities. The Action Plan does not alter the current institutional framework or EU legislation. Irregular migration is already addressed by a comprehensive set of EU legislation, including co-operation in the Eurosur framework. Existing cooperation in the Eurosur framework ensures cooperation in order to improve situational awareness and increase reaction capability at the external borders for the purpose of detecting, preventing, and combating irregular migration and cross border crime and contributing to ensuring the protection and saving the lives of migrants.

Q: Does the EU only have maritime interests or does it also have maritime responsibilities?

A: The EU is a global economic and political actor. It aspires to be a global maritime security provider. This means that the EU is ready to assume and take its responsibility in the global maritime domain, commensurate with its political and economic weight. The global maritime domain is of vital importance to the EU. Free commerce and trade depend on free seas and oceans. In addition, seas and oceans are interrelated eco-systems; they are a source of resources; seas and coastal areas are zones for tourism, etc. Lastly, the EU is ready to contribute to respect for international law, human rights and democracy, and rules-based good governance at sea.

Q: What are the financial implications of this Action Plan? Will this cost money for the taxpayer?

A: No, this Action Plan makes sure that taxpayer's money is used as efficient as possible. It should therefore primarily lead to cost reductions since it provides for an opportunity to share resources better than beforehand.
**Q: What is the role of Member States?**

A: Assuring the full engagement of Member States in the development and implementation of the Action Plan is instrumental. Many of the activities laid out in the European Union Maritime Security Strategy & Action Plan are implemented by national authorities and it's also the responsibility of Member States to carry out operational activities at sea.

The Commission, the EEAS and the Member States of the Council, with its 28 Member States, worked very closely with each other in order to deliver a full-fledged Strategy & implementing Action Plan, which reflects the views and interests of all stakeholders.

Since the very beginning of this process, Member States have provided substantial input and written contributions. In June 2013, the Commission and the European External Action Service organised a stakeholder consultation where Member States expressed their support to this initiative. In fact, the Joint Communication from the Commission and the High Representative only provided elements to develop a strategy. The shaping of the European Union Maritime Security Strategy was carried out together with the Member States, in the EU Council under the Hellenic Presidency (Strategy) and later the Italian Presidency (Action Plan).

**Q: Will the adoption of such an extensive action plan at EU level mean that powers will be transferred to Brussels? Aren't security issues rather something that should be looked at mainly at national level?**

A: One of the fundamental principles of the European Union Maritime Security Strategy & Action Plan is that it will not in any way alter the respective competences of EU institutions and EU Member States. In other words, there will be no transfer of competences from Member States to the EU or vice versa. Nor will there be any additional legal obligations put on Member States. It is a voluntary process that expresses the political desire of the EU and its Member States. This is primarily a document which foresees closer collaboration at all levels and it will still be Member States authorities which will have to carry out operational activities at sea. Member States which are best suited to carry out this type of work in cooperation with the EU Agencies.