PRESS RELEASE Nr 35/2014
21 October 2014

EUCAP Nestor trains and mentors Somaliland Coast Guard young officers in Berbera

On 21 October, the European Union’s Maritime Capacity Building Mission in the Horn of Africa and Western Indian Ocean (EUCAP Nestor) celebrated the successful completion of a two month Mentoring, Teaching and Training (MTT) programme for thirty young officers of the Somaliland Coast Guard in Berbera from Hargeisa, Berbera and Zeyla, Mait and Las Qoray.

The ceremony took place at the Coast Guard Headquarters in the presence of dignitaries from Somaliland, as well as representatives of the European Union. The Head of EUCAP Nestor Country Office Somalia, Mr. Pierre-Aimé Riccio, attended the last few days of the MTT, as well as the ceremony which was combined with the handover of small equipment and a Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat.

The MTT programme that started in mid-August was aimed at providing the basic foundation knowledge on coast guard functions and operations, as well as the requirements necessary to execute these in a safe and secure manner. It also touched on the functions of the Coast Guard Headquarters. Enabling the Somaliland Coast Guard and authorities to counter maritime crime at sea and ashore more effectively and to work more efficiently with national, regional and international partners is at the core of EUCAP Nestor’s mandate.

The MTT programme was designed and run by the EUCAP Nestor Senior Maritime Adviser for Somaliland, Marco Hekkens from the Netherlands, and made use of the facilities of the Somaliland Counter Piracy Coordination Office, the Berbera Maritime and Fisheries Academy and EUCAP Nestor’s new Field Office in Hargeisa.

Speaking about the preparations for this course, Marco Hekkens said: “It became clear to me that the further development and future of the Somaliland Coast Guard very much depends on the young generation Coast Guard officers, which are properly mentored, educated and trained.
for their respective roles. When I discussed this with the Somaliland authorities, this approach was immediately recognized and I could rely on their full support to start the preparations for this pilot programme. I was particularly pleased that Mr. Ali Mohamed Waran Ade, Somaliland Minister of Interior, officially opened the start of the MTT with a speech, asking the students to maximize their opportunity to enhance their individual and collective knowledge. He viewed their maritime education as an investment in the country.”

Admiral Ahmed Aw-Osman Abdi, Commander of the Somaliland Coast Guard said: “Somaliland has over 856 km of Coastline. As a Coastal State we have International Obligations to fulfill. We are grateful for the assistance provided by EUCAP Nestor so far. Capacity Building efforts have to continue to help us in our combat against all sorts of Maritime Crime in our Maritime Domain. The dedication of Marco Hekkens is worth mentioning and we thank him for his good efforts”.

The Executive Director of the Counter Piracy Coordination Office Mohamed Osman Ahmed spent positive words for EUCAP Nestor’s effort in Somaliland: “For 23 years Somaliland did not have an opportunity to train young coastguard officers. This training has been offered at the right time. I am confident that by end of 2016, with the assistance of EUCAP Nestor we will have trained young coastguard officers that combat all sorts of maritime crime on sea and on shore”.

The ceremony ended with the handover of equipment for the Somaliland Coast Guard. This included several portable as well as some very large binoculars for coastal surveillance, outboard engines and a rigid hull inflatable boat with a large assortment of safety equipment for patrolling coastal waters.

Background
EUCAP Nestor is a civilian EU mission under the Common Security and Defence Policy which assists host countries in the Horn of Africa and Western Indian Ocean region (Somalia, Somaliland, Djibouti, Seychelles, Tanzania) in strengthening their capacity to ensure maritime security and in particular to fight piracy.