EU MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY

ECSA POSITION PAPER
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Shipowners call for the European Parliament and the Council to endorse the joint EC/EEAS communication in which global actions are described to safeguard the maritime security.

ECSA welcomes the recognition that shipping industry partners have a key role in the Strategy and that there is a need to liaise on a number of maritime security related elements. The reference to the global context and the EU's ambition to work towards coordinated action at the international and regional level on maritime security is also welcomed.

ECSA underlines the importance of better coordination of security related activities, such as surveillance activities and information sharing, by different EU agencies and national actors. This should result in better and more information with regard to the security situation, including piracy, and in decreased administrative requirements to be fulfilled by shipowners.

ECSA endorses the success of EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta and therefore calls for a confirmation of the extension of the Atalanta mandate. Given the tacit recognition of EU Maritime Security interests ECSA emphasises that the EU should continue the excellent counter piracy work in East Africa and should develop immediately an action plan for West Africa. The EU should use the dialogue with African States to decide on joint concrete action to provide safe and secure trade links in West Africa.

ECSA advocates a coherent, harmonized, internationally accepted and mutually recognized, comprehensive security strategy, which is wherever possible non-regulatory and appreciates the high level of security reached in shipping already today.

Endorsement by the Council and the European Parliament of the joint Communication should result in detailed debate and discussion with all stakeholders in order to develop considered Action Plans with concrete actions and corresponding time-lines.

Piracy

The EC/EEAS joint communication takes well into account the problem of piracy and armed robbery at sea and advocates the need to preserve the success of ATALANTA, as well as the need for better coordinated EU action with regard to the Gulf of Guinea.

East Africa
Since 2011, the number of Somali piracy attacks has steadily decreased, due to a combination of factors: EU and international naval units patrolling the wider area off the coast of Somalia and the Indian Ocean, the application of Industry Best Management

Practices that are designed to reduce a ship's vulnerability and at times use of private armed guards and vessel protection detachments on board ships.

However, European shipowners would warn that the reduction of pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia should not be misinterpreted. Until a permanent solution is found on land, efforts by the shipping industry and the international community only address the symptoms and not the root causes of piracy. The number of interventions by naval forces (86 by EUNAVFOR since May 2009 only to deter attacks) clearly shows that the work is not yet done. Until there is clear evidence of successful capacity building ashore that changes the incentives for piracy then there will be a requirement to continue to address the symptoms.

West Africa
A different piracy business model exists in West Africa, where the coastal states are sovereign states and piracy is linked to oil theft, kidnapping, corruption and other maritime crime. Attacks are often more violent and usually target valuables on board, including the ship's cargo. Shipowners are most worried by the current increase in kidnapping of seafarers and the hijacking of ships in 2014.

The Ocean Beyond Piracy State of Maritime Piracy 2013 estimates 100 total piracy attacks in 2013, which took place off the coast of Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

Moreover, armed robbery at sea really disrupts trade flows and has a direct impact on the ability of certain West African ports to serve as hubs for this part of the continent. The effect is thus much wider than simply piracy.

ECSA appreciates that the European External Action Service and the European Commission recognize the security problem in West Africa in their joint Communication.

ECSA hopes that the seriousness of the problem of piracy and maritime crime in the Gulf of Guinea is fully understood by the Members States and hopes that the Implementation Plan of the Gulf of Guinea Strategy will identify and address concrete proposals to deter and defeat the critical maritime security issues in West Africa.

With regard to piracy in West-Africa ECSA underscores the importance of a safe and reliable reporting mechanism. It is today still impossible to quantify attacks or attempts.

International standards for privately contracted armed security personnel (PCASPs) are being dealt with through the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in cooperation with the International Maritime Organization. The EU should continue to support the aim for identical common binding standards for PCASPs, in order to maintain an international level playing field which reflects the global character of maritime transport. The EU should not take any action to harmonize the relevant and complex policies regarding the use of firearms in the member states except through the ISO system.

Measures to improve ship and port security

ECSA agrees with the EC/EEAS in its joint communication that existing legislation on port and ship security must be fully applied.

However, prior to the development of any new initiatives, the effect and possible synergies with existing initiatives must be carefully analysed. Furthermore, to advance the framework of the existing security regulations for the maritime transportation of goods on the whole, an enhanced integration and simplification of the existing security measures and initiatives is needed. One concrete example that could avoid repeatedly administrative burdens for ships calling at multiple EU ports is that the European port authorities should be encouraged to trust the judgment of their European colleagues.

The requirement for new security measures could affect important performance characteristics of maritime transport such as the time and cost required to import and export goods. These performance changes could suppress overall demand for shipping and /or increase costs unnecessarily, and change the relative attractiveness of shipping services to importers, exporters, and cargo carriers. Effort should be made to ensure that security requirements do not adversely affect the positive modal shift to maritime.

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ECSA, the European Community Shipowners' Associations, formed in 1965, comprises the national shipowners' associations of the EU and Norway. ECSA's aim at promoting the interests of European shipping so that industry can best serve European and international trade and commerce in a competitive and free business environment, to the benefit of shippers and consumers. The European Economic Area maintains its very prominent position with a controlled fleet of 40% of the global commercial fleet.

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