

EUNAVFOR Med: EU agrees to start the active phase of the operation against human smugglers and to rename it "Operation Sophia"

Following the political guidance provided by the defence and foreign affairs ministers at the informal meetings on 3 and 5 September, EU Ambassadors within the Political and Security Committee agreed to start the first step of the second phase of the operation as of 7 October 2015 and approved the corresponding rules of engagement.

The EU naval operation against human smugglers in the Mediterranean will be able to board, search, seize and divert vessels suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking on the high seas, in line with international law.

The Political and Security Committee also agreed that EUNAVFOR Med should be renamed "Sophia" after the name given to the baby born on the ship of the operation which rescued her mother on 22 August 2015 off the coast of Libya.