2026/2243

12.10.2026

COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2026/2243

of 9 October 2026

amending Decision (CFSP) 2020/472 on a European Union military operation in the Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Article 42(4) and Article 43(2) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

(1) On 31 March 2020, the Council adopted Decision (CFSP) 2020/472 [1], which established a European Union military operation in the Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI).

(2) On 11 March 2025, the Council adopted Decision (CFSP) 2025/488 [2], which extended EUNAVFOR MED IRINI until 31 March 2027.

(3) On 25 May 2026, United Nations Security Council ('UNSC') Resolution 2292 (2016) expired. That Resolution authorised States, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect on the high seas off the coast of Libya any vessels they had reasonable grounds to believe were carrying arms or related materiel to or from Libya, directly or indirectly, in violation of the United Nations arms embargo on Libya.

(4) On 14 July 2026, in the context of a Strategic Review of the operation, the Political and Security Committee (PSC) agreed to extend EUNAVFOR MED IRINI by two years until 31 March 2029.

(5) The PSC furthermore welcomed the direction outlined in the Strategic Review to organise, as part of the Union's integrated approach, the operation's current tasks around three main roles.

(6) Decision (CFSP) 2020/472 should be amended accordingly,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Decision (CFSP) 2020/472 is amended as follows:

(1) in Article 1, paragraph 1 is replaced by the following:

'1. The Union hereby establishes and launches a military crisis management operation with the political objectives of safeguarding Union interests in the Mediterranean Sea and contributing to peace and stability in Libya.';

[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, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2020/472/oj).

[2] Council Decision (CFSP) 2025/488 of 11 March 2025 amending Decision (CFSP) 2020/472 on the European Union military operation in the Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI) (OJ L, 2025/488, 12.3.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2025/488/oj).

(2) Articles 2 to 5 are replaced by the following:

'Article 2

Mandate

In pursuit of the objectives set out in Article 1(1), EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall, within its means and capabilities:

(a) safeguard Union interests in the Mediterranean through credible protection and deterrence;

(b) contribute to the implementation of UNSCRs in support of peace and stability in Libya; and

(c) foster Mediterranean partnerships through capacity building and training (CB&T), and naval diplomacy, as part of the Union integrated approach.

Article 3

Safeguarding Union interests in the Mediterranean through credible protection and deterrence

1. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall contribute to Maritime Situational Awareness (MSA) regarding illicit activities, further expanded towards Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), in order to detect, monitor and report on illicit activities and threats to the security, safety and economic interests of the Union. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall also gather information useful for contingency planning.

2. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall contribute to constraining Russia's "shadow fleet", as defined in International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly Resolution A.1192(33) adopted on 6 December 2023, in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and international regulations, through a whole-of-route approach.

3. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall support the protection of Critical Maritime Infrastructure (CMI), with a view to enhancing maritime situational and domain awareness, including through trials and pilot deployments of technological solutions for maritime protection.

4. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall contribute to disrupting the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks. To that effect, EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall support 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.

5. The information gathered in the context of the tasks set out in paragraphs 1 to 4 may be stored and released to the relevant authorities of Member States and to competent Union bodies, as well as, if applicable, to NATO, and in the context of the task set out in paragraph 4, to the UN Panel of Experts on Libya.

6. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall report to the Political and Security Committee (PSC) on all issues and events related to actions, such as inspections or visits to verify the flag, in carrying out the tasks set out in paragraphs 1 to 4. The PSC may consider any subsequent measure, as appropriate.

Article 4

Contributing to the implementation of UNSCRs in support of peace and stability in Libya

1. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall contribute to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on Libya established under UNSCR 1970 (2011) and subsequent UNSCRs, by reporting on and deterring illicit arms trafficking to or from Libya. For that purpose, EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall gather information, with aerial, satellite, maritime and other assets, on the trafficking of arms and related materiel from all directions (spanning sea, air and land routes) and share it with relevant partners and agencies, on a case-by-case and need-to-know basis, through the mechanisms in the relevant planning documents and in accordance with Article 14.

2. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall contribute to the implementation of UN measures against illicit exports of petroleum from Libya. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall conduct monitoring and surveillance activities and gather information on illicit exports from Libya of petroleum, including crude oil and refined petroleum products, which are contrary to UNSCR 2146 (2014) and subsequent UNSCRs, and share it with relevant partners and agencies on a case-by-case and need-to-know basis, through the mechanisms in the relevant planning documents and in accordance with Article 14.

3. The information gathered in the context of the tasks set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 may be stored and released to the relevant authorities of Member States and to competent Union bodies, as well as to the UN Panel of Experts on Libya and, if applicable, to the relevant Libyan authorities.

4. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall report to the PSC on all issues and events related to actions, such as inspections or visits to verify the flag, in carrying out the tasks set out in paragraphs 1 and 2. The PSC may consider any subsequent measure, as appropriate.

Article 5

Fostering Mediterranean partnerships through CB&T and naval diplomacy, as part of the Union integrated approach

1. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall pursue CB&T activities in support of Libyan institutions responsible for maritime law enforcement and Search and Rescue (SAR) at sea, while looking for sustainable long-term projects. That task shall be carried out in EUNAVFOR MED IRINI's agreed Area of Operation or in a Member State territory, upon invitation by that Member State. That task may also be carried out in the territory, including the territorial sea, of Libya or of a host third State neighbouring Libya, where the PSC so decides following an assessment by the Council on the basis of an invitation by Libya or the host State concerned, and in accordance with international law. For the purpose of that task, EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall establish and operate a monitoring mechanism in close coordination with other relevant stakeholders, including where necessary in Libya.

2. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall provide a platform for maritime security cooperation in the Mediterranean and explore, through naval diplomacy and exercises, opportunities beyond Libya to include other interested third countries in the region, such as Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon.

3. For the implementation of the tasks referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2, EUNAVFOR MED IRINI may collect, store and exchange with the relevant authorities of Member States, competent Union bodies, the UN Support Mission in Libya, INTERPOL, the International Criminal Court and the United States of America the information, including personal data, gathered for the purpose of the vetting procedures on possible trainees, provided that they have given their consent in writing. Moreover, EUNAVFOR MED IRINI may collect and store necessary medical information and biometric data on trainees provided that they have given their consent in writing.';

(3) in Article 10, paragraph 4 is replaced by the following:

'4. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall host a Crime Information Cell (CIC) composed of staff of relevant law enforcement authorities of Member States and of Union agencies referred to in paragraph 3, in order to facilitate the receipt, collection and transmission of information, including personal data, on human smuggling and trafficking as referred to in Article 3, on the arms embargo on Libya and on illicit exports of petroleum as referred to in Article 4, as well as on crimes relevant to the security of the operation.';

(4) in Article 13, the following paragraph is added:

'6. For the period from 1 April 2027 until 31 March 2029, the reference amount for the common costs of EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall be EUR 16 880 000. The percentage of the reference amount referred to in Article 51(2) of Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 (*) shall be 0 % for commitments and 0 % for payments.

(*) Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 of 22 March 2021 establishing a European Peace Facility, and repealing Decision (CFSP) 2015/528 (OJ L 102, 24.3.2021, p. 14, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2021/509/oj).';

(5) in Article 14, paragraphs 8, 9 and 10 are replaced by the following:

'8. The HR shall be authorised to conclude the arrangements necessary to implement the provisions on the release or exchange of information in this Decision.

9. The HR may delegate the authorisations to release or exchange of information as well as the ability to conclude the arrangements referred to in this Decision to EEAS officials, to the EU Operation Commander or to the EU Force Commander in accordance with section VII of Annex VI to Decision 2013/488/EU.

10. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI is hereby authorised to share with the UN Panel of Experts on Libya the information, other than personal data, gathered on illegal or unauthorised activities and on suspected incidents of non-compliance with the UN arms embargo on Libya as provided in UNSCR 1970 (2011) and subsequent Resolutions, as well as the information gathered on suspected incidents of non-compliance with the UN measures to prevent illicit exports of petroleum from Libya as provided in UNSCR 2146 (2014) and subsequent Resolutions.';

(6) in Article 15, paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

'2. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall end on 31 March 2029.'.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

Done at Luxembourg, 9 October 2026.

For the Council
The President
S. HARRIS