2025/334

17.2.2025

COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2025/334

of 14 February 2025

amending Decision (CFSP) 2024/583 on a European Union maritime security operation to safeguard freedom of navigation in relation to the Red Sea crisis (EUNAVFOR ASPIDES)

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 10 January 2024, the United Nations Security Council adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2722 (2024), condemning in the strongest terms the Houthi attacks on merchant and commercial vessels, underscoring the importance of the exercise of navigational rights and freedoms of vessels of all States in the Red Sea, including for merchant and commercial vessels transiting the Baab al-Mandab Strait, in accordance with international law, demanding that the Houthis immediately cease all such attacks, affirming that the exercise of navigational rights and freedoms by merchant and commercial vessels, in accordance with international law, must be respected, and taking note of the right of United Nations Member States, in accordance with international law, to defend their vessels from attacks, including attacks that undermine navigational rights and freedoms.

(2) On 8 February 2024, the Council adopted Decision (CFSP) 2024/583 ([1]) establishing a European Union maritime security operation to safeguard freedom of navigation in relation to the Red Sea crisis (EUNAVFOR ASPIDES).

(3) On 19 February 2024, the Council adopted Decision (CFSP) 2024/632 ([2]), which launched EUNAVFOR ASPIDES with a mandate until 18 February 2025.

(4) On 17 October 2024, the European Council, when reiterating its call on the Houthis to stop immediately all attacks and to allow maritime security to be restored, underlined the crucial contribution of EUNAVFOR ASPIDES in promoting maritime security and freedom of navigation.

(5) On 28 November 2024, in the context of the Strategic Review of the operation, the Political and Security Committee (PSC) recommended that EUNAVFOR ASPIDES be extended until 28 February 2026.

(6) On 21 January 2025, the PSC furthermore agreed that, in order to ensure maritime situational awareness in the Area of Operation, EUNAVFOR ASPIDES should collect information, in addition to data necessary to protect vessels, on arms trafficking and on shadow fleets with a view to sharing that information with Member States, the Commission, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), as appropriate.

(7) On 15 January 2025, the United Nations Security Council adopted UNSCR 2768 (2025), recalling, in particular, the importance of maritime security and recognising that the maintenance of maritime security in the region of the Red Sea is essential for the stability of global supply chains and economic development. The United Nations Security Council reiterated its demand that the Houthis immediately cease all attacks against merchant and commercial vessels.

(8) Decision (CFSP) 2024/583 should be amended accordingly,

([1]) Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/583 of 8 February 2024 on a European Union maritime security operation to safeguard freedom of navigation in relation to the Red Sea crisis (EUNAVFOR ASPIDES) (OJ L, 2024/583, 12.2.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2024/583/oj).

([2]) Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/632 of 19 February 2024 launching the European Union maritime security operation to safeguard freedom of navigation in relation to the Red Sea crisis (EUNAVFOR ASPIDES) (OJ L, 2024/632, 20.2.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2024/632/oj).

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Decision (CFSP) 2024/583 is amended as follows:

(1) in Article 1, the following paragraph is added:

'6. In order to ensure maritime situational awareness in the Area of Operation, EUNAVFOR ASPIDES shall collect information, in addition to data necessary to protect vessels, on arms trafficking and on shadow fleets, with a view to sharing that information with Member States, the Commission, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), as appropriate.';

(2) in Article 6, paragraph 5 is replaced by the following:

'5. EUNAVFOR ASPIDES shall liaise closely with the shipping industry, in particular through the Maritime Security Centre – Indian Ocean (MSC IO).';

(3) in Article 9, the following paragraph is added:

'3. The financial reference amount for the common costs of EUNAVFOR ASPIDES for the period from 19 February 2025 until 28 February 2026 shall be EUR 17 400 000. The percentage of the reference amount referred to in Article 51(2) of Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 shall be 20 % for commitments and 20 % for payments.';

(4) Article 10 is amended as follows:

(a) in paragraph 2, point (b) is replaced by the following:

'(b) up to "RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED" level for information released to Djibouti, Egypt, the Gulf Cooperation Council and its Member States, and to India, as well as to other third States designated by the PSC.';

(b) the following paragraphs are inserted:

'3a. The HR is hereby authorised to exchange information, as appropriate and in accordance with the operational needs of EUNAVFOR ASPIDES, with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) up to the level provided for in the Agreement between the European Union and NATO on the Security of Information (*).

3b. The HR is hereby authorised to exchange information gathered on illegal activities during the course of the operations of EUNAVFOR ASPIDES with the UNODC, INTERPOL and EUROPOL. The release of personal data, if any, shall be carried out in accordance with the law of the State of the vessel or aircraft processing such personal data.

(*) Agreement between the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation on the Security of Information (OJ L 80, 27.3.2003, p. 36, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2003/211/oj).';

(c) paragraph 4 is replaced by the following:

'4. The release and exchange of information referred to in this Article shall be conducted in full respect of the principles of reciprocity and inclusiveness. Classified information received shall be handled by EUNAVFOR ASPIDES irrespective of the nationality of individual members of staff and solely on the basis of operational requirements.';

(5) Article 11 is amended as follows:

(a) paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

'2. EUNAVFOR ASPIDES shall end on 28 February 2026.';

(b) paragraph 3 is replaced by the following:

'3. A strategic review of EUNAVFOR ASPIDES shall be conducted in 2025, synchronised with a strategic assessment of EUNAVFOR ATALANTA.'.

Article 2

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

Done at Brussels, 14 February 2025.

For the Council
The President
A. SZŁAPKA