

Information Bulletin April 2023



EMASoH in April – Bottom Line Up Front

- EMASoH countries condemn the seizure and detention by Iran of the Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker *Advantage Sweet* in the Gulf of Oman and the Panama-flagged oil tanker *Niovi* in the Strait of Hormuz.
- The FS *Courbet* is in support of operation AGENOR and performed 21 reassurance calls to merchant vessels in the Gulf area.
- The Embassies of the EU member states and Norway in the UAE visited the French frigate *Courbet* for a presentation about EMASoH and operation AGENOR.
- The global merchant fleet reached 2.2 billion Dead Weight Tonnage (DWT) in January 2022, indicating steady growth and emphasizing its crucial role in international trade. EMASoH countries represent almost 30 percent of the world merchant fleet based on DWT and beneficial ownership, signalling their increasing influence in global trade.

Seizure and detention of the TMO *Advantage Sweet* and *Niovi*



Figure 1: The TMO *Niovi* being swarmed by a dozen small boats from the IRGCN, moments before she was seized and sent to Bandar Abbas, Iran.

The countries participating in the European Maritime Awareness mission in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASoH), Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway and Portugal, condemn the seizure of the merchant vessel *Advantage Sweet* by the Iranian Navy on the 27th of April 2023 and the seizure of the merchant vessel *Niovi* by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Navy (IRGCN) on the 3rd of May 2023 in breach of international law.

At the time of the seizure, the *Advantage Sweet* was in international waters in the Gulf of Oman whereas the *Niovi* was sailing outbound in the Strait of Hormuz in the Omani territorial waters. Both tankers have been redirected towards the harbour of Bandar Abbas, Iran. We call for the immediate release of the vessels, their crews and cargoes, while ensuring the good treatment of the crew members, their access to consular assistance, supplies, and their free communication. The seizures of the *Advantage Sweet* and *Niovi* oil tankers put at risk the maritime safety and freedom of navigation in the Gulf region.

The French frigate *Courbet* reassures shipping

In the beginning of April the French frigate *Courbet* joined our operation. With its presence in the area and with its helicopter, the French ship contributes to maritime situational awareness in the Gulf region and to the freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. The *Courbet* patrolled in the Gulf region, including the Strait of Hormuz, and reassured merchant shipping by calling on VHF when sailing by.

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In this call the EMASoH asset states:

“This is EMASoH warship/helicopter/Maritime Patrol Aircraft operating under an European-led mission in accordance with international law to re-assure shipping. Please do not hesitate to report any unusual events while sailing in the Gulf area on VHF to the EMASoH Headquarters.”

In April, 21 vessels in total have been reassured by call when in the Gulf area. These vessels took the initiative to report to EMASoH about their sailing schedule in the framework of the Voluntary Reporting Scheme (VRS). This information is necessary for the FHQ to have in situations where we need to get quickly in contact with the merchant vessel.



EU and Norway Ambassadors event



In April we hosted the EU and Norway Ambassadors event on board the French frigate *Courbet* in Abu Dhabi. During this meeting, with the presence of more than 20 Ambassadors or their representatives a comprehensive briefing on the strategic priorities and recent tactical operations carried out by operation AGENOR was provided. This meeting underscores the need for ongoing efforts to enhance security measures in the Gulf region. As global trade continues to expand, it is essential that we

remain vigilant in protecting the security of maritime trade routes.

Ambassadors of Denmark and Luxembourg visit Force Headquarters

On the 18th of April, the Danish Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, Anders Bjørn Hansen, visited the Force Headquarters of the European-led Maritime Awareness Mission in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASOH). During his visit, Ambassador Hansen was briefed on the mission's activities and the importance of maintaining maritime security in the region for the Danish maritime sector.

Denmark has a long history of naval tradition and expertise and recognizes the critical importance of maritime security for global trade. The country has been actively involved in international efforts to promote maritime security, and its participation in EMASOH is just one example of its commitment to this cause.

The visit of the Danish Ambassador to the Force Headquarters of EMASoH underscores Denmark's endeavour to promote maritime security and support international efforts to protect the free flow of global trade.



As a landlocked country in Western Europe, Luxembourg may not be the first country that comes to mind when thinking about shipping and maritime operations in the Gulf region. However, Luxembourg has a significant presence in the region's maritime industry, with many of its companies involved in shipping and logistics. The Ambassador of Luxembourg to the UAE, H.E. Robert Lauer, visited the FHQ on the 26th of April. H.E. was briefed on his country's maritime footprint in the Gulf region, EMASoH's mission objectives and its contribution to regional security which is beneficial for the maritime economic interests of Luxembourg. He had the opportunity to meet with the staff and learn more about their ongoing efforts to enhance maritime security in the region. The Ambassador expressed his appreciation for the work of EMASoH.

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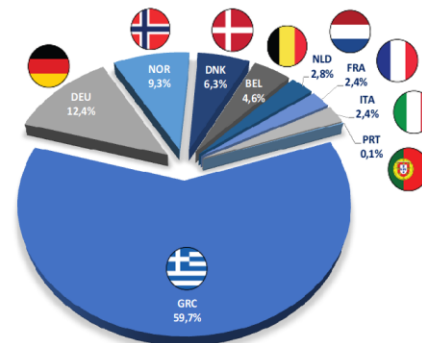
EMASoH fleet versus world fleet

The global merchant fleet plays a crucial role in international trade, and the recent data indicates that it has been growing steadily. In January 2022, the carrying capacity of the world merchant fleet reached 2.2 billion dead-weight tonnage (DWT), which is 63 million DWT more than the previous year.

*World Merchant fleet by country of beneficial ownership and by dead-weight (DWT) tonnage – all types of ship (2022): 2,18 billions of tons

- GRC 17.634 %
 - DEU 3.651 %
 - NOR 2.749 %
 - DNK 1.864 %
 - BEL 1.351 %
 - NLD 0.822 %
 - FRA 0.703 %
 - ITA 0.701 %
 - PRT 0.411 %
- } 29,52 %

EMASoH fleet versus world fleet



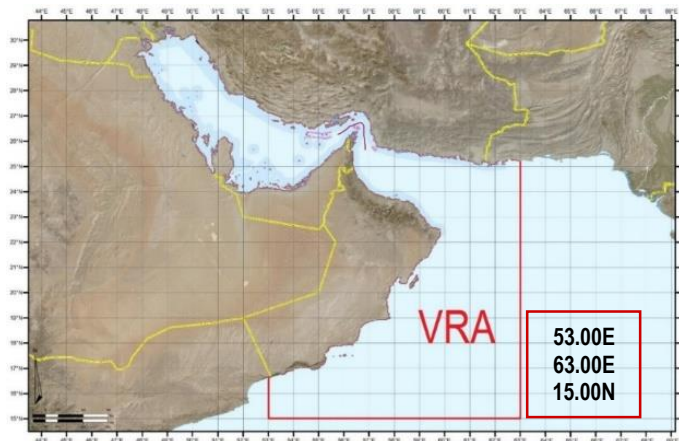
One notable trend in the global merchant fleet is the increasing influence of EMASoH countries. Almost 30 percent of the world merchant fleet based on dead-weight tonnage (DWT) and beneficial ownership can be attributed to EMASoH countries. This is a significant development, as it indicates that these countries are becoming increasingly important players in global trade.

At the European Union (EU) level, EMASoH countries merchant fleets represent about 80 percent of the EU Member States merchant fleet active in the EMASoH area of operation. This highlights the importance of the operation AGENOR, not only for the EMASoH nations, but also for all EU member states.

Voluntary Reporting Scheme

We have an average of 44 ships reporting each day in the EMASoH Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA).

Shipping companies are invited to participate to our Voluntary Reporting Scheme. Voluntary reporting improves the cooperation and guidance EMASoH can provide to ships. Voluntary reported ships are also prioritised for possible accompaniments with EMASoH's naval assets and reassuring calls with naval and aerial assets. Before entering the Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA), 48 hours in advance, or as soon as possible:



- ✓ **inform** EMASoH about the timing of your intended entry and exit of the VRA;
- ✓ **confirm** the planning 6 hours before entering and share possible changes to the journey planning;
- ✓ **report** any suspicious behaviour to the coast guard of the coastal state and to EMASoH.

Voluntary reporting to EMASoH via ctf474-emasoh.vra.fct@def.gouv.fr or phone +971 265 74 278.