

Elements for the Seminar organised by the Atlantic Centre on ‘Multidimensional responses to complex emergencies in the Atlantic’

- To begin with, I would like to express the appreciation for having invited me to this Seminar. My intervention reflects the EU’s integrated approach to various developments and crises in the Atlantic Ocean.
- Let me recall that the Atlantic is a strategic space for the EU, but also for NATO. As such, the **EU has defined an Atlantic Maritime Strategy since 2011**. Focused on the five themes defined by the European Commission – implementing the ecosystem approach, reducing Europe’s carbon footprint, sustainable exploration of the natural resources on the sea floor, responding to threats and emergencies and socially inclusive growth.
- **In 2013, the Commission presented an Action Plan** to implement the Strategy and in the meantime, it has generated about 1200 new maritime projects, representing roughly 6 billion euros in investments. **This Action Plan was updated in July 2020**.
- This plan aims at strengthening the EU ability to support the economic revival given the multiple negative effects stemming from COVID-19, but also to align it with the European Green Deal. There is a strong focus on the EU Atlantic area: France, Ireland, Portugal and Spain. At the same time, the EU will continue to work with international partners, including the US, Canada, Brazil, South Africa, promoting among others maritime multilateralism.
- Turning to crises and emergencies, we have to acknowledge that the oceans and the seas bring both opportunities and risks. Some of these risks have their epicentre in the wider Atlantic area.
- The EU is at the forefront of international efforts to tackle them. For example, **is significantly involved in addressing the multiple security challenges, including for the maritime domain, which the Gulf of Guinea is experiencing**. As you may know, the Gulf of Guinea has maintained itself at the top of piracy and maritime robberies. Since 2013, the EU has been supporting the countries and the regional organisations (ECOWAS and ECCAS) to fight transnational and organised crime in the maritime domain.
- In addition, in September 2020, the EU Political and Security Committee endorsed the **Coordinated Maritime Presences Concept (CMP)** with the Gulf of Guinea as pilot project. This is a new tool that aims to strengthen maritime security awareness and promote international cooperation at sea. The EU is about to reach out to the GoG countries to start this project.
- On the other side of the ocean, we have to deal with **the trans-Atlantic cocaine route**. The EU Commission has renewed in 2018 the financing of the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N), based in

- Lisbon, until 2021. Is also funding the Seaport Cooperation Project (SEACOP) project, in order to counter maritime illicit trafficking and associated criminal networks in Latin American, the Caribbean and Africa.
- At this point, I would like to recall that the **Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance (AORA)**, established in 2013, should continue to play a key role in sustaining prosperity and security in the Atlantic. Furthermore, **the North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum** should remain a central pillar for discussing emerging Atlantic Ocean risks, while enhancing coordination and cooperation on both shores of the Atlantic.
 - At the same time, the EU is working hard to improve its own defence capabilities. Thus, under the guidance of the **European Defence Agency**, works on the OCEAN 2020 project. This project is looking to support maritime surveillance and interdiction missions at sea through successful integration of manned and unmanned air, naval surface and underwater platforms. Other EDA projects include the Naval Manoeuvrability and the Underwater Control.
 - Furthermore, through the **Permanent Structured Cooperation**, the EU is seeking to build cutting-edge technologies that may also serve the security in the Atlantic. Several maritime projects are included which shows that the maritime domain is at the forefront of the PESCO joint efforts. As these capabilities become available, they will enhance EU's ability to deal with crises and enhance its profile as a maritime security provider as well.
 - At this point, I conclude my intervention. Thank you again for the opportunity to interact with this distinguished audience today.