

PRESS RELEASE

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EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta: new Operation Commander appointed

Today, **Major General Antonio Planells Palau** was appointed Operation Commander of EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta, starting on 1 October 2019. He takes command from Vice Admiral Antonio Martorell Lacave. Major General Antonio Planells Palau is currently Commandant General of the Spanish Marine Corps and has been serving in the Spanish Navy for more than 41 years.

EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta contributes to the deterrence, prevention and repression of **acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast**. The operation is part of the EU's comprehensive approach for a peaceful, stable and democratic Somalia.

The operation also **protects vessels** of the World Food Programme and other vulnerable shipping, monitors fishing activities off the coast of Somalia and supports other EU missions and programmes in the region.

The **EU's comprehensive approach to Somalia** comprises diplomatic efforts, development support, humanitarian aid as well as engagement in the field of rule of law and law enforcement. It includes three complementary missions under the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy: EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta, EUCAP Somalia, enhancing Somalia's maritime civilian law enforcement capacity and EUTM Somalia, providing political and strategic level military advice to the Somali authorities and contributing to the development of the Somali National Army (SNA)'s own training capacity.

Today's decision was adopted by the Political and Security Committee.

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