



**Measures to enhance maritime security in response to
increased attacks off the coast of Somalia**

Merchant Shipping Notice No 82

*Notice to Shipowners, Ship Operators and Managers,
Owners' representatives and Masters, and Officers*

Merchant Shipping Notice No 71, of the 25 October 2005 provided advice to ship masters proceeding through waters off the coast of Somalia.

The Directorate would like to draw the attention of all concerned to the official website (<http://www.mschoa.eu/>) of the Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa (MSCHOA), the coordination centre tasked to safeguard merchant ships operating in the region by preventing and deterring acts of piracy in the Gulf of Aden, off the Horn of Africa and in the Somali basin.

MSCHOA was set up by the European Union as part of a European Security and Defence Policy initiative to combat piracy in the Horn of Africa. In November 2008, the Council of the European Union set up a naval mission (*EU NAVFOR ATALANTA*) to improve maritime security off the Somali coast by preventing and deterring pirate attacks and help safeguard merchant shipping in the region. As from mid December 2008, an EU Naval Task Group, supported by maritime patrol aircraft, has been operating in the area.

MSCHOA aims to provide support and protection to mariners from illegitimate and dangerous attacks, safeguarding a key global trade route. Through close dialogue with shipping companies, masters and other interested parties, MSCHOA will build up a picture of vulnerable shipping in these waters and their approaches. The Centre, which is manned by military and merchant navy personnel from several countries will then coordinate with a range of military forces operating in the region to provide support and protection to mariners.

To do this effectively, MSCHOA needs to know about merchant ships approaching, transiting or operating in the region. The MSCHOA website offers shipowners, ship masters and agents the facility to register their details securely with MSCHOA, update positions of their vessels and receive information and guidance designed to reduce the risk of pirate attacks.

To this effect, masters and operators of Maltese ships that operate or that may operate in this area are strongly advised to register on the website so that they may receive updated information on operations/patrols/piracy attacks in the region.

Merchant Shipping Directorate
Valletta

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