

EU maritime capacity-building in the Horn of Africa

Dr. Filip Ejdus, Marie Curie Fellow, University of Bristol

About the research

In 2012, the EU launched EUCAP Nestor, civilian mission mandated to support maritime security capacities in five states in the Horn of Africa and West Indian Ocean: Djibouti, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia and Tanzania. The mission was intended to contribute to a lasting solution to the problem of piracy onshore and provide an exit strategy for naval anti-piracy operations at sea. Following an Interim Strategic Review in 2015, the mission shifted its focus from training to strategic level mentoring and advising, and phased out its activities in Djibouti, Seychelles, Tanzania, and Kenya and focused on Somalia. In December 2016, the mission was renamed 'EUCAP Somalia'. The EU gave it a broader civilian maritime security mandate that does not focus only on piracy, but also other maritime challenges, including illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and human or arms trafficking. It also expanded its activities from training local people to fight against piracy, to developing Somali maritime and law enforcement governance, institutions and operational capabilities. This policy briefing outlines key lessons learned from EUCAP Nestor experience to date and considers implications for future policy and practice.

Image source: Photo by: Tahir Turk <https://tinyurl.com/Yb7bmorp>



Policy implications

If the EU wants to use EUCAP Somalia to make a discernable impact on Somali maritime security capacity it should:

- focus on long-term capacity building rather than the swift delivery of results;
- strengthen its focus on building local capacities to deal with maritime crimes other than piracy that matter more to Somalis (e.g. illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, arms and human trafficking, and illegal waste dumping);
- consider providing hardware (such as boats) required by local authorities to fulfil their own roles countering maritime crime, together with appropriate training to use equipment, whilst also considering local absorption capacities;
- undertake local needs assessments and appropriate follow up activities are necessary if training on its own is to be relevant and have sustainable results;
- consider seconding additional advisors to meet the mission's projected capacities, requirements and responsibilities;
- work to address high turnover rates amongst staff and experts; and
- work to facilitate greater in-country autonomy and flexibility in the work of the mission.

Key findings

- The fact-finding and technical assessment missions that preceded deployment were short and incomplete, producing a mission mandate difficult to implement.
- The ambition of the initial mandate was such that it required greater resources than were provided to be realistically achievable.
- The mission has had to work with fewer advisors than envisaged due to fewer secondments from member states than expected and a high turnover of existing staff.
- The mission has struggled with the issue of 'local ownership' throughout (except in Seychelles), with limited buy-in from host states into its objectives and their lack of willingness to cooperate amongst themselves.
- Local authorities have tended to prioritise the need for hardware, such as boats and coastguard infrastructure, while the EU mission has focused predominantly on 'soft' capacity building, such as advice and training.
- Centralised direction of mission activities by the EU has undermined efforts to be flexible in the face of local circumstances, and to achieve local ownership.
- EU member states and local stakeholders have looked for quick results pegged to the mission's two-yearly mandate extension and yearly budget approval cycle.
- Since 2015, the EU has adapted EUCAP's mandate to better reflect local needs: it no longer treats piracy as a crime in isolation, but supports the development of maritime civilian law enforcement authorities and their operational capabilities.
- The renaming of the mission 'EUCAP Somalia' has been controversial, and was opposed by the breakaway region of Somaliland. A solution was found to use the name EUCAP.

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Further information

1. Ejodus, Filip, "Here is your mission, now own it!" The rhetoric and practice of local ownership in EU interventions", *European Security*, doi: [10.1080/09662839.2017.1333495](https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2017.1333495). Article published online 6 June 2017
2. [EU Council decision 2012/389/CFSP](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32012D0389) of 16 July 2012 on the European Union Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity Building in the Horn of Africa (EUCAP NESTOR) <http://bit.ly/2k62xM4>
3. [EU Council Decision 2016/2240/CFSP](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32016D2240) of 12 December 2016 amending Decision 2012/389/CFSP on the European Union Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity Building in the Horn of Africa (EUCAP NESTOR) <http://bit.ly/2InhmKa>
4. Tejpar, Johan and Kristina Zetterlund, "[EUCAP Nestor: Trying to steer out the doldrums](#)", FOI, October 2013

More information about the project is available at: <http://bit.ly/2kRt936>

This project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 656971.



Contact the researcher

Filip Ejodus, Marie Curie Fellow,
University of Bristol:
Filip.Ejodus@bristol.ac.uk