



SHARING BEST PRACTICES ACROSS THE ATLANTIC
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**"THE PROACTIVE ROLE IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA PERFORMED BY THE
ITALIAN COAST GUARD IN MAKING CONCRETE
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED
MARITIME POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION "**

Intervention of:

Vice Admiral Raimondo Pollastrini,
Commandant of the Italian Coast Guard



Since 1865, the Italian Coast Guard have been operating at sea, in ports and along the national coastlines to safeguard the Italian and European's interest, their citizens as well as of all navigators.

As a "military status" Maritime Administration, Coast Guard have significant capabilities, professionalism, dynamism and natural vocation to operate for the Community's benefits and interests.

The integrated maritime policy, launched by the European Union in 2007, is firmly underway with changes and encouragement towards the Nations that are part of it, which are called to enforce the existing synergies and to strengthen the role of Europe in the world and this possible throughout new and always more significant investments in the research, technology and innovation sectors.

We live in Italy, a Nation which is geographically mostly surrounded by sea, entirely projected to the centre of the Mediterranean, which mainly depends, for its survival and development, from waterway transport of goods.

The Italian Coast Guard have done a lot until today to achieve, in anticipation, the growing and improving opportunities offered by the evolution of time. With this speech, I will outline, in the most synthetic possible way, our most recent initiatives as an innovative administration able to perform a proactive role which makes the Italian Coast Guard a keystone for the European Union in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea.

INITIATIVES CONCERNING MARITIME SURVEILLANCE

The increasing request of safety of maritime transports and the coming to light of the internationalization process of maritime economy, fed by the considerable production of new technologies, have always highlighted the key role of the institutional tasks and operative missions assigned to the Italian Coast Guard.



An element which is considered critical by the Italian Coast Guard, and also by the Coast Guards Services in the world, I think is the need to know, instantly, the actual consistency of naval traffic in ports and in territorial seas as well as, in wider and vast areas of international seas which surrounds the country, as for example, the Search and Rescue areas of responsibility and the Ecological Protection Zones that Italy as recently declared.

This requires a better valuation and integration of information and data received from the numerous sensors and supplied systems owned and managed by the Italian Coast Guard. To be more precise, it's about the maximum integration of the following systems:

- Vessel Traffic Service (VTS)
- Automatic Identification System (AIS)
- Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)
- Mandatory Reporting Systems (MRS)
- Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT)
- Clean Sea Net (CSN)
- Safe Sea Net (SNN) and
- Port Management and Information System (PMIS)

to which must be added all the information reported from naval and air assets.

Such systems, overall, already form, at a central level, a high integrated system, delegated to monitor maritime traffic and manage emergencies at sea, also capable to provide information analysis. As well known it has been provided by the Italian company SELX-Sistemi Integrati

Therefore, the system will continue to be developed in the near future, for a better way to perform institutional tasks that are accomplished by a specific and exclusive attribution

given to the Italian Coast Guard for the control and maritime traffic monitoring as well as in the competency of applying maritime safety and security.

Interlinking maritime surveillance systems presupposes thorough consideration of diverse legal issues related to the exchange of information collected for different purposes and from different sources. For example, some of the provisions relating to data collection are based on international instruments.

Particular attention is to be paid to the obligations that Member States have already entered into and are in the process of implementing regarding the establishment of the integrated maritime surveillance network.

Before to proceed to next items I would like to emphasize the role that the maritime surveillance can play in avoiding more and more the tragedy that daily affects our seas, I am referring to the illegal immigration which constantly in the recent decades interested the Mediterranean.

The perspective of the Italian coast guard is that the phenomena is mainly a huge search and rescue operation, considering the unsafe conditions of the vessels involved, and in this sense I consider of a particular usefulness the support provided by the maritime surveillance which more and more will be able to depict the maritime domain in a complete way.

SPATIAL PLANNING



The need to meet with the subject of maritime affairs *governance* in an integrated and coordinated way throughout different Countries comes essentially from the fact of the complexity of spatial planning, in which many problems converge: maritime transports, energy production, fisheries and all the other kind of sea exploitation.

Particular complexity in planning and managing marine spaces derives by having the close basin of the Mediterranean. I believe it's essential not to limit the approach to this issue as an European opportunity, but also to consider it as a joint approach to the other Countries facing the Mediterranean.

In this sphere, it is considered that a particular relevance in order to make a draw-up of a maritime Euro - Mediterranean policy could be represented by the exclusive right of the coastal States in exploiting the continental platform, which is subjected to national sovereignty.

In brief, in the European approach based on the harmonization of national maritime policies, I represented to our Ministry of Infrastructure and Transports, the opportunity to evaluate first of all the definition of common marine spaces, to be appointed preeminently

to the traffic in respect of the principles of free navigation at sea, to then rationalize the other juridical zones with a course of harmonization of the national politics.

The major difficulty, in such delicate context, appears to be to persuade the single Member States to create common marine spaces, obviously subsisting, individual disadvantages that are not always put a part in advantage of the collectivity.

NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY: THE MEDITERRANEAN REGIONAL AIS SERVER AND THE AIS PAN MEDITERRANEAN NETWORK

The Directive 2002/59 dated June 2002 of the European Parliament and Council, concerning a “setting up a Community vessel traffic and information system”, expects that Member States must adopt appropriate equipments for receiving and treating data provided from naval automatic identification systems.

For this purpose, the Italian Coast Guard stepped forward to promote the initiative of achieving an automatic exchanging AIS information system between Member States facing the Mediterranean sea. The same initiative was agreed with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA).

The work began on December 2006 and has taken to the realization in Italy, in our national operation center in Rome, of a “*Mediterranean Regional AIS Server*”. The structure created, allows – nowadays – to exchange data (up to 20,000 daily tracks of merchant ships subject to SOLAS Convention and fishing boats longer than 15 meters which sail in the Mediterranean Sea) between Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and EMSA.

To share a common maritime *picture* is one of the best ways to assure a concrete control of the maritime zones and - not less in importance - it is essential for promoting further cooperation. For this reason the Mediterranean Regional AIS Server must be considered as a first step towards the achievement of a complete *maritime picture* involving not only EU Member States, but all the States which face on that delicate basin; in this point of view the Regional AIS system is a powerful tool offered by Italy to encourage the dialogue and cooperation between all Mediterranean Countries.

In that sense, in June 2009, the Head of the General Direction for Energy and transport of the European Commission, formally asked the Italian Coast Guard to act as the Administration Leader in the Mediterranean in supporting North African Countries, in the development of their respective national structures for receiving AIS data that, once created, can be integrated and interfaced with the existing European Regional System.

NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY: THE FIRST MEDITERRANEAN COAST GUARD SERVICES FORUM

Looking at similar initiatives, the Italian Coast Guard promoted the organization of the “1st Mediterranean Coast Guard Services Forum” which took place on 6th and 7th May 2009 in Genoa.

The event fitted-in extremely well with the activities finalized to benefit bilateral and multilateral cooperation between Mediterranean Countries in typical traditional Coast Guard Services and Maritime Administrations matters, and to give an adequate place where to discuss and exchange information.

The elevation of operative and technical standards of the Coast Guard Services and Maritime Administrations of Mediterranean Countries is the Forum’s main objective. Appreciation was showed to the initiative, considering also the excellence role covered by the Italian Coast Guard in the International panorama.

The invitation to participate to the Forum was sent to all the persons in charge of Coast Guard services or Maritime Administrations of the 23 Mediterranean coastal Countries (including Portugal and Jordan), to 19 Observer Countries (the remaining Member States of the European Union and EFTA, plus the coastal Countries of the Black sea) and to another 8 extra - Mediterranean Countries (such as USA, Argentina and Yemen) with whom exist a consolidated relationship of collaboration within Coast Guard services, for a total of 50 Countries invited.

Finally, the invitation was also extended to the Heads of 10 International Organizations among which the International Maritime Organization, the Commission and relevant agencies of the European Union as well as the REMPEC and the Chairman of the North Atlantic Coast Guard forum.

At the end of the working sessions an Action Plan was presented as a basis for the future meetings and activities which will be organized in the next future.

NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY AND THE REGIONAL INITIATIVES: THE REMSSA-MED PROJECT

The Mediterranean will become in the next following years for the European Union, the first and most important front bench test in a process of coordination and control of several maritime activities.

The Mediterranean is very vast, there’s the need to control more than 50.000 km of coast, the systems available for Member States are mostly incompatible and in many cases insufficient to cover all the requirements, the daily problems to face are innumerable and

many times regard contemporary more Nations or Organizations, many situations must be dealt with immediate effect.

It appears evident that the management of all these different aspects suggests the need to create a Regional Centre for the Mediterranean, that, even if it has to work closely together with the Central European Agencies, must have the possibility to collect and manage proper data and act on time and with consistency.

In brief, the specificity and characteristics of the Mediterranean, widely justifies the constitution of a Regional Centre named “Regional European Maritime Safety and Security Agency”.

The initiative, moreover, fully meets within the Community strategic vision that, in more occasions, was expressed in terms of decentralization, at a regional level, of relevant functions aimed at cooperating, according to the neighborhood policy of the European Union.

In the more recent documents of the Commission it was, as a matter of fact, declared that: *“...EU National authorities should be rationalized, and move forward towards integrating systems... it exists the necessity to reinforce maritime governance, in particular through the coordination of European agency, especially with a regional approach by maritime basins...”*. And more: *“Where appropriate ... it could also be useful to develop regional integrated maritime policy in line with relevant National and EU policy. Active participation by maritime stakeholders in integrated National, regional or local maritime policy is highly recommended”*.

Italy is the ideal candidate for this institution, for the following main reasons:

- its geographic position in the Mediterranean;
- the huge operational competency of the Italian Coast Guard, called to protect marine environment and the safety and security of navigation;
- the possibility to immediately dispose of the integrated Command and Control system managed by the Italian Coast Guard;
- at the European level, the relevant role (on both institutional and technological/industrial levels), in the process of settlement and design of integrated pan – European systems of Maritime Surveillance, as well as for the settlement of the relative policies and implementation: in particular, the Italian role as leader for the settlement of systems and services regarding *Maritime Surveillance* in the GMES and STIRES program with the realization, of the Mediterranean AIS regional server, as well as the pan – Mediterranean AIS network.

STRUGGLE AGAINST PIRACY

The Italian Coast Guard have been following daily, throughout its Operational Centre, the evolvement of piracy phenomena, since 2005.

Operational Centre of the Italian Coast Guard, as National Competent Authority, continuously monitors, engaging its technological systems and throughout the constant

contacts with ship owners, the movements of national merchant fleet and national fishing vessels in the world, and in particular, in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean areas.

It also provides with the continuing update of national shipping, to the well-timed dissemination of information related to the situation on scene, of the necessary precautions to undertake, during transit, to reduce risks to the minimum and the actions to carry out in case of threats or attacks.

Our Operational Centre, receives immediately and completely signal alerts regarding threats or attacks in act throughout its normal equipment of ordinary communication systems, besides it is the “proper recipient” of the satellite alert system called “Ship Security Alert System”; so it is a key link of the Italian alarm chain, in both cases of effective attack and seizure.

In case of confirmation that a ship has been taken by pirates, immediately the chain of reaction is activated by informing the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Infrastructures and Transports, the Crisis Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Defense, and the Department of the Navy, for the appropriate decisions and line of actions to adopt.

If the result of the decision is to make a military action, the Operational Centre is then, thanks to its continuous updated database, capable of providing immediate national ship’s security plans to the Special Forces, including the various ship designs, from which can be deducted essential information for planning proper actions.

Italy, in the recent past, realized a monitoring maritime traffic system (VTS) off the Yemeni coasts, in the field of a bilateral collaboration between Italy and Yemen, and within which, our Country have already invested more than 20 million euro.

The Yemeni’s VTS Centre could host one of the scheduled Counter Piracy Regional Centres expected to be soon created. In the month of June 2009 was celebrated the inauguration of the Area Control Centre of the Yemeni National Vessel Traffic Monitoring System of Aden – the system was developed by SELEX Sistemi Integrati, an Italian – Finmeccanica – company.

The Vessel Traffic Monitoring Centre, as stated before, may become a proper coordination centre for the safety of the whole entire region. Italy have been supporting, at both bilateral and international levels, the Yemen’s commitment to maritime safety/security and its fight against piracy. Under the aegis policy of the Ministry of Infrastructures and Transports, the Italian Coast Guard is strengthening the collaboration with Yemen through launching new training programs.

Finally I would like also to mention the support provided to Djibouti with the delivery of coast guard naval and training.

CONCLUSIONS

I conclude my speech announcing the next adoption, in a proper document, of our new strategy.

The future strategy will provide the strategic vision that will guide our future efforts; it's the pledge that the Italian Coast Guard assumes towards the Nation, Italian population and European citizens.

It will describe how the Italian Coast Guard will work in the future, defining the permanent assigned tasks and identifying the future challenges and the obstacles which will be faced. It individuates the priorities and the high evaluated strategic objectives and, for last, the long term vision, giving a deep glimpse in gathering the useful indicators for making the future decisions more appropriate in achieving the best position in a world evolving continuously.

Such strategy is fully coherent with national Law, International Conventions and Agreements in force to which Italy complied to, and even more, is the strategic objectives' response to the European Integrated Maritime Policy.

Briefly, the new Strategy of the Italian Coast Guard can be reassumed in the three following statements:

1. The Italian Coast Guard positions itself as the main actuator, for Italy, of the European Integrated Maritime Policy;
2. The Italian Coast Guard will face the future challenges with an integrated and intersectional approach, ensuring in this way, maritime governance effectiveness to National and Community interests;
3. The Italian Coast Guard intends to strengthen its strategic role for the Country, as the indispensable keystone for the National and European Union interests at the centre of the Mediterranean.

THANK YOU INDEED FOR YOU KIND ATTENTION

In conjunction with Italian Embassy in Washington, SELEX Sistemi Integrati has organized the event in line with the recent declarations of Secretary Janet Napolitano, looking for an “international approach to the security”, and “seeking to access the true nature of the challenge” recommending potential practical responses.

The event involved prominent representatives of Italian and U.S. Government organizations involved in the matter (Department of Homeland Security, US and Italian Coast Guard, academia and industry).

VADM Raimondo Pollastrini

Commandant of the Italian Coast Guard

Vice Admiral Raimondo POLLASTRINI was born in Milan on 17th June 1945. He joined the Coast Guard, first as a Reserve Officer and then as a Commissioned Officer and served in various Coast Guard Offices such as Genoa, Trieste, Savona, Viareggio and Livorno.

In 1985, at the Naval Academy of Livorno, Admiral Pollastrini started teaching Law of Navigation and International Maritime Law in numerous courses attended mostly by graduates in Law, Political Sciences and Economics.

From 1986 to 1989 he was Director of the Harbour Workers' Office in Livorno (also during the temporary Commissioning of the Harbour Workers' Company).

Between 1989 and 1991 Admiral Pollastrini was responsible for and coordinated the Department of Judicial Science at the Naval War Institute in Livorno which, for years, has been training Senior Officers to become future managers of the Navy.

From 1991 to 1995 he held the post of Vice Commander of the Livorno Coast Guard Office and from 1994 until May 1995 he was assistant Commissioner to the new Livorno Port Authority.

From 3rd to 15th June 1990 in Sanremo, he attended the 30th Course on the Law of Armed Conflicts.

From 1995 to 1999 Admiral Pollastrini held the post of Head of the Coordination Office of the Coast Guard Headquarters in Rome and was also Assistant to the Commandant.

In 2000 he attended the Institute of Advanced Studies of the Defence.

Admiral POLLASTRINI, Rear Admiral (LH) since 01/01/1999 and promoted Rear Admiral (UH) on 01/01/2003, on 1st August 2000 became Maritime Director of Liguria and Commander of the Genoa Coast Guard Office. From 30 October 2004 to 4th March 2007 he held the post of Head of the 1st Department (Regulations and employment of personnel) of the Coast Guard Headquarters in Rome.

From 5th March to 3rd July 2007, Admiral Pollastrini held the post of Vice Commandant of the Italian Coast Guard.

*On 4th July 2007 Admiral Pollastrini became **Commandant of the Italian Coast Guard**.*

Admiral Pollastrini has a degree in Italian Literature (Florence University) and in Law (Genoa University) with a thesis on Law of Navigation entitled "Protection of the crew and the responsibility of maritime ship agents".

He has been decorated with the following honors:

- *Commander of the Order of Merit for the Italian Republic;*
- *Golden Medal on the environment's Honour;*
- *Mauriziana Medal for fifty years of military career;*
- *Silver Medal for length of Command;*
- *Golden cross with star for length of military service (40 years);*
- *Commemorative cross for humanitarian activity in Albania;*
- *Knight of the Order of Saint Gregory Magno;*
- *Commander of the Order of Saint Agatha of the Republic of San Marino.*
- *Commander of the Saint George Holy Military Order of Constantine.*

On 20th June 2008 he was nominated Honorary Member of the Italian Association of Maritime Law. On 11th July 2008 the Foundation "Centro Internazionale Radio Medico" (CIRM) granted him the Certificate of Merit.