



AFFGEN.2
Head of Division

Brussels, 5 February 2021
eeas.sg.affgen.2 (2021) 807929

Mr Matthias Döring

Subject: Your request for access to documents of 19 January 2021
Our ref: 2020/006

Dear Mr Döring,

Thank you for your request for access to documents, which the EEAS has examined in the framework of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001¹.

After a search in the EEAS filing systems, document management databases and archives, EEAS has identified the Pull Factor Monthly Reports matching your request. Please be informed that Operation IRINI's maritime assets are mostly deployed in the eastern part of the Area of Operation, where violations of the arms embargo occur, and away from the main migration route from Libya to Europe. Given Operation IRINI's mandate and Area of Operation, the Operation's ships should only be required to intervene in very few, if any, rescue operations. Since its launch on 31 March 2020, the Operation has not been involved in any SOLAS (Safety Of Life at Sea) event. Nevertheless, exceptional circumstances may occur as regards the safety of life at sea where ships participating in the operation will have to fulfil obligations under international law. In this context, arrangements regarding the disembarkation, reception and swift relocation of persons rescued at sea have been established. These arrangements address the need to protect human life and provide assistance to persons in distress in accordance with international law. Since the Operation, through its reports, has not signalled any "pull effect", none of the EU Member States or EU institutions has requested a review of the Operation mandate on this specific issue.

Every month, through the Political and Security Committee and on the basis of substantiated evidence gathered according to the criteria set in the Operation Plan, Operation IRINI provides to the High Representative a Pull Factor Monthly Report on migration. These reports are classified as "RESTRICTED".

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (hereafter the "Regulation").

The afore mentioned documents contain operational information which are still valid. Their public release would reveal this sensitive information, and consequently allow the public, including the traffickers, to know how EUNAVFOR MED IRINI is collecting information and monitoring the migration-related aspects. Disclosing this information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards EU`s public security and international relations.

Therefore, I regret to inform you that we are not in a position to disclose these documents at this point in time, neither as a whole or partially, since it could seriously undermine the protection of public security, defence and military matters and international relations, as per Article 4 (1) (a), 1st, 2nd and 3rd indents, of the Regulation 1049/2001.

Should you wish this position to be reviewed, you may confirm your initial request within 15 working days.

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]

Gabriele Visentin