

Dear colleagues,

Our remarks on a roadmap draft.

There are three different aspects that should be taken into account for the situation in Mediterranean:

1. The reason, why those people are at sea in vulnerable situation and need the rescue. And additional question about the actions of the privately owned vessel carrying out SAR operations as their predominant activity;
2. Search and Rescue in the meaning of Hamburg Convention;
3. Migration.

The topic of this working group is operational cooperation on Search and Rescue in the Mediterranean Sea.

Search and Rescue (SAR) itself, as said, is regulated by customary and treaty law. SAR begins with distress call (the information about people in distress) and ends, when rescued people are delivered to a place of safety. The facilities, who perform the search and rescue, can be different, including also private vessels. UNCLOS article 98 sets the general rule for every seafarer and relevant conventions along with IAMSAR manual, which gives the specific guidelines for SAR operations. We can not prohibit and prevent the vessels at sea to start the Rescue Operations, but we can coordinate SAR actively and take more control over the situation. One way to do it more efficiently is operational cooperation as suggested. Another instruments, that might be useful to review, are national and regional SAR plans.

The roadmap, deliverable 1), SAR situations described. Could be limited to two situations:

1. SAR Operations carried out under the coordination by EU Member States MRCC;
2. SAR Operations carried out without the coordination by EU Member States MRCC outside the SAR area (agreed Search and Rescue region – SRR) of the EU MS and where the place of safety for disembarkation is requested to the EU MS.

MRCC can and shall involve any vessel at sea to participate in SAR Operations. We should not make a difference what form of ownership the ship has as long as the Captain is in contact with MRCC and confirms, that his/hers vessel and crew is capable of conducting SAR. Also prior information sharing between MRCC's and/or States might reduce the risks and gives the certainty that the resources available at sea (privately owned vessel carrying out SAR operations as their predominant activity) are capable.

Deliverable 4. The roles and responsibilities of flag and coastal state are already in place- we can share the information and fill the capability gaps, if necessary.

No specific comments on other topics.

Best regards,



Ministry of the Interior
Estonia



