

OBSERVATORY ON *IAI* EUROPEAN DEFENCE

APRIL 2016

In the spotlight

27 April

New European policy for the Arctic

The High Representative Federica Mogherini and the European Commission presented a strategic proposal aimed at guiding the policy of the EU in the Arctic region. The plan, which was requested in 2014 by the Council and the Parliament, contains 39 actions divided into three sectors: environmental protection and fight against climate change, sustainable development, and support to international and bilateral cooperation. Among other measures, the plan provides for the establishment of a pan-arctic integrated system of satellite observation and the start-up of a strategic dialogue on security matters.

1 April

Libya: The EU updates sanctions

The Council of the EU added three names to the list of people subject to restrictive measures: Agila Saleh, president of the Libyan Council of Deputies in the House of Representatives, and two members of the internationally unrecognised General National Congress, namely the prime minister (and minister of Defence) Khalifa Ghwell and the president Nuri Abu Sahmain. According to the Council, the three are viewed as obstructing the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement of 17 December 2015 and the formation of a Government of National Accord in the country.

11 April

The EU extends certain sanctions against Iran

The Council decided to extend until 13 April 2017 the restrictive measures in place against 82 individuals and one entity, namely the unit of the police in charge of cybercrime. The measures, adopted by the EU in 2011 in response to serious human rights violations, are unrelated to the

sanctions concerning Iran's nuclear program, which were lifted on 16 January following the implementation by Iran of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPA) agreed upon on 14 July 2015.

19 April

EU mission in the Central African Republic

The Council approved the establishment of a military training mission (EUTM RCA) to contribute to the reform of the defence sector in the Central African Republic. EUTM RCA, based in Bangui and operating with an initial 2-year mandate, follows up to the military advisory mission EUMAM RCA, established on 19 January 2015, whose mandate expires on 16 July.

20 April

NATO training exercise over the Baltic Sea

The air forces of seven NATO members (Belgium, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and two partner states (Finland and Sweden) have conducted a joint military exercise in the skies of the Baltic region. The exercise, named Ramstein Alloy and hosted at Ämari Air Base in Estonia, lasted two days and involved the air forces of NATO members and partner countries in the simulation of a number of scenarios, including search and rescue operations and air-to-air refuelling. NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission's assets were also involved in the exercise.

21 April

EU adopts a directive on the use of PNR data

Following the approval by the Parliament on 14 April, the Council adopted a directive on Passenger Name Records (PNR), regulating the transfer from airlines to Member States of PNR data of passengers of international flights as well as the treatment of such data by the competent

authorities. The measure, which has been at the centre of a long debate among EU institutions, aims at reinforcing the tools available to authorities for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crimes. Member States will have two years to implement the directive in their national legislations. Concerned with the security situation, all Member States already declared that they will avail themselves of the possibility, allowed by the directive, of also gathering PNR data for selected intra-EU flights.

28 April

Horn of Africa: new EU measures to tackle irregular migration

The Commission announced the adoption of a package of measures for the Horn of Africa worth 117 million euros. The new measures are aimed at addressing the root causes of irregular migrations and forced displacements in the region. The actions, which follow up to a previous package worth 253 million euros adopted in December 2015, include protection programmes for refugees in Ethiopia, Sudan and Kenya, the creation of employment opportunities for young people in Kenya, two projects to support refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sudan and a regional project to create a more conducive environment for legal migration and mobility.

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