



THE EUROPEAN COAST GUARD FUNCTIONS FORUM (ECGFF)



Visit the European Coast Guard Functions Forum Official Web Site:
www.ecgff.eu

Current Chair



“The true capacity of the Forum is the skill at foreseeing and writing down today the script of a tale which is going to have other protagonists, other interpreters, but the same beneficiaries, for whom Coast Guard services represent life, work, hope, future”.

Italian Coast Guard Commandant
V. A. (ITCG) Felicio ANGRISANO



Origin of the European Coast Guard Functions Forum



The initiative of a European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF) was first launched in 2009. A Conference of the Heads of Coast Guards

Authorities of EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries, supported by FRONTEX, was then arranged in Warsaw, just when a parallel initiative in Genoa, from the Italian Coast Guard, was giving origin to the Mediterranean Coast Guard Forum (MEDFORUM). In Poland, participants agreed to develop together an inter-agency cooperation, coordination and multifunctional performance for jointly approach the future challenges in the fields of maritime border security, maritime safety, search and rescue, marine environmental protection and other maritime issues. The main goal remains to make coherent the



activities among Member States and relevant EU bodies in this field. Other Conferences followed: Malaga (April 2010), Malmoe (September 2011), Dublin (2012) and Chios (2013) assigning to the Forum a double role of meeting place for sharing Coast Guard issues and that of possible instrument to supply effective technical counseling for the European Institutions. The general structure of the Forum has been progressively set. It envisages a Plenary Conference that gathers once a year and shares the acceptance of candidacies for the Chairmanship which is assisted by a Secretariat which meets three times a year to develop the mandate annually assigned by the Plenary Conference. Over the course of time Terms of Reference have been established listing the functions related to the dialogue of the Forum and also its general objectives. Recently mandates of the Plenary Conference aimed to build up the web site of the Forum (www.ecgff.eu - accomplished), to create a Net of EU Coast Guard Training Centres (in progress) and to



establish a Permanent Secretariat of the Forum in Brussels (ongoing).



MISSION & TASKS

The European Coast Guard Functions Forum¹ is a non-binding, voluntary, independent and non-political forum whose membership includes the Heads of the Coast Guard Functions or equivalents of each European Union maritime nation and associated Schengen countries, the European Commission and its Institutions and Agencies with related competencies in Coast Guard Functions (CGF²). The overall aim of the Forum is to study, contribute to and promote understanding and development of maritime issues of importance and of common interest related to Coast Guard Functions across borders and sectors, both civil and military, and to contribute to progress in the various CGF activities.

COAST GUARD FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Coast Guard Functional activities are mainly defined for the purpose of the Forum and in no order of priority as:

- maritime safety, including vessel traffic management
- maritime security
- maritime customs activities
- the prevention and suppression of trafficking and smuggling and connected
- maritime law enforcement
- maritime border control
- maritime surveillance
- maritime environmental protection and response
- search and rescue
- accident and disaster response
- fisheries control
- activities related to the above Coast Guard Functions

OBJECTIVES

With the general aim of improving the development of CGF's across borders and sectors, the Forum has the following objectives:

- To build and maintain a network of Heads of National authorities for Coast Guard Functions and designated Officers from EU Institutions, Agencies and Directorates with related competencies in CGFs
- To agree Rules and Procedures for the Conference, Secretariat and any working groups including matters relating to funding
- To assist in the development of common operational procedures and standards in line with prescribed international norms, reinforce synergies and improved operational preparedness, cooperation and response across borders and sectors
- To consider the possibilities of promoting trust, burden sharing, asset sharing and enhanced regional cooperation
- To establish a standing forum promoting the exchange of information, expertise, technical assistance, best practice, training, exercises and education
- To provide relevant recommendations as appropriate
- To act as a shared advice source on operational 'coast guarding' to others including the EU Institutions³
- To develop over time and as appropriate a coordinated and collective response through cooperation and agreement to emerging and existing risks in the EU maritime domain and
- To monitor ongoing development in the maritime domain that may have an impact on Coast Guard Functions

NEXT STEPS

The fifth Plenary Conference hosted in Greece on September 2013 agreed on many important principles of cooperation. The work for making the Forum a model of cooperation for the exchange of information, expertise, best practices, operations, training and development of a coordinated and collective response to emerging and existing risks in the EU maritime domain is going on. One of the main objectives to be carried out within the Forum's Chairmanship is the so-called "Coast Guard Functions Academies, Institutions and Training Centres EU Network Project (ECGFA NET)", which aims to bring together and encourage cooperation of the EU Members States and component EU Agencies Academies, Institutions, Training centres relevant with Coast Guard Functions activities, based on existing structures and work programs of the aforementioned organizations. The long term goal of this project will be to formulate common agreed "core curricula" related to the Coast Guard Functions with the aim to increase the standardization of the training programme. Furthermore, another task for the Chairmanship is to work towards the establishing of a Permanent Secretariat in Brussels, that is expected to be inaugurating by the end of the Italian Chairmanship. This office will be the point of contact of the Forum with the EU Institutions and Agencies, and it will help the work of the Forum for the definition of a legal status of the Forum aimed to its own financial sustainability.

ORGANIZATION

The Forum's **Plenary Conference** of the Heads of Coast Guard Functions is arranged annually by the Member State responsible for Chairmanship in order to agree on the further work, projects, research or produce documents within the scope of the Forums objectives. The **Chairmanship** of the Forum is agreed and appointed at the closing of each annual ECGFF Plenary Conference. The Chairmanship, with the support of the **Secretariat**, is responsible to plan and prepare the next Plenary Conference and to further the objectives of the Forum. The Secretariat is chaired by the Member State responsible for the Chairmanship for the forthcoming conference. The Italian Chairmanship (2013/14) is currently supported by the following Secretariat Members: Finnish Border Guard, German Federal

Police, Hellenic Coast Guard, Irish Coast Guard, Romanian Border Police, Secrétariat Général de la Mer, Swedish Border Guard and EU Institutions and Agencies (such as: DG MARE, DG MOVE, FRONTEX, EMSA, EFCA, EUSC).



¹ Full title 'Forum of the Heads of the Coast Guards Functions of the European Union and Schengen associated countries'. ² The Forum recognises that each Member State has different national structures for the delivery of CGFs and that the Head of Delegation may be accompanied by other national institutions competent in CGF's. The selection of which national CGF Service provides the Head of Delegation is strictly a matter for the Member State who will advise the Chair of the name of the HoD. ³ With respect to that EU Institutes and agencies with related competencies in CGF's