



NEWSLETTER ECGFF

Belgian Chairmanship 2022 - 2023

Successful first workshop under Belgian presidency of the ECGFF

In the framework of the Belgian presidency of the European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF), Frontex and the Belgian Maritime and River Police organised a workshop from February 28th till March 2nd with the assistance of the Coast Guard Secretariat. With approximately 100 participants from different European countries, interesting presentations, a panel discussion and numerous opportunities to exchange expertise and to network, it can be considered a very successful first edition of the workshops

Cooperation: the key to success

Over the course of three days, the participants worked on the theme 'Enhancing cross-sector and cross-border synergies'. The main objective was to share expertise on maritime security, multifunctional operations and building operational synergies, whilst also looking ahead to potential future collaborations. The 15 speakers from the various European member states cited many examples of partnerships that are rendering valuable benefits, both across borders and services. Once again, cooperation proves to be the key to success.

Three main themes

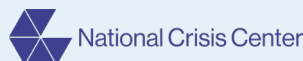
The workshop addressed three major themes that are highly topical in the field of maritime 'Safety' and 'Security'.

The first theme consisted of maritime surveillance. Examples of synergies in maritime surveillance were explained. The various successful operations in cooperation with FRONTEX were reviewed, and in addition attention was given to the formalisation of the partnership between MAOC-N (Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre - Narcotics),

The Coast Guard is a unique Belgian organisation that pools and coordinates the expertise of 17 different partners in the maritime sector to ensure safety and security at sea.

In 2022 - 2023, the Belgian Coast Guard chairs the **European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF)**. The recurring theme throughout the Belgian presidency consists of the question: "How will we, as a country, ensure our safety/security at sea?"

Together with the European Agencies **Frontex, EMSA and EFCA**, the Coast Guard organises a number of workshops throughout the year. Furthermore, a **Cyber security working group** is being organized in cooperation with **DG Mare of the European Commission**, as well as a summit that will take place at the end of September 2023.





Belgium and many European member states. The Belgian MAOC-N membership is an important step in the optimization of information exchange on drug trafficking and smuggling. Furthermore, the security role of the Belgian Maritime Security Centre (MIK) in monitoring security threats was also discussed in detail.

A second major theme was joint, multifunctional operations. In today's world, it is vital to organise operations across borders and services and build partnerships, thus mutually reinforcing each other. EFCA, EMSA and FRONTEX exchanged views on this topic during a discussion panel. Moreover, participants zoomed in on collaborative partnerships in the law enforcement process of irregular migration.

The third part of the workshop was centered on the future. A whole range of opportunities and challenges were discussed. For instance, how technological developments can help with underwater imaging and how adapted legal frameworks are being developed to ensure efficient monitoring of critical infrastructure such as wind farms, submarine data cables and pipelines.

A workshop with EMSA and EFCA, and a BELCOASTEX exercise, during which 3 different scenarios will be tested, are to follow later this year during the remaining time of the Belgian presidency. In September, the Belgian presidency will be concluded with a closing event during which conclusions will be presented.

