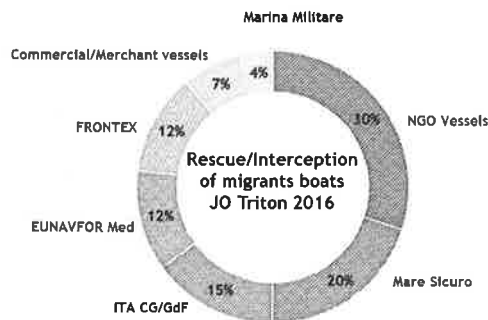


NGOs operating in the Central Mediterranean Sea

At the beginning of the year more than half of all incidents were prompted by a satellite phone call from smugglers or migrants in distress at sea to the MRCC in Rome. The phone call generally resulted in a targeted rescue made by the vessel closest to the migrant boat at the moment of the phone call. At the beginning of the year most rescues were performed by Italian law enforcement, EUNAFORMED or Frontex vessels. NGO vessels were involved in less than 5% of incidents. Then, in June there was a dramatic shift in this process. Firstly, in June the number of rescue operations being performed by NGOs started to rise reaching more than 40% of all incidents in October. Secondly, in June the number of incidents that were preceded by phone calls started to decrease dramatically, to the extent that by October only 10% of all incidents were initiated by a satellite phone call.



Share of involvement in SAR by various entities present in the Central Mediterranean Jan-Oct 2016

The overall number of incidents increased dramatically over the same period, this means that a significant number of boats are now being apprehended or reused, by NGO vessels, in the absence of official information about their location.

In addition, since June 2016 most of the interceptions involving NGO vessels have been related to detections and interceptions made directly by the NGOs vessels, without distress calls to the Italian MRCC.

The low number of distress calls using satellite phones could be linked to the following circumstances:

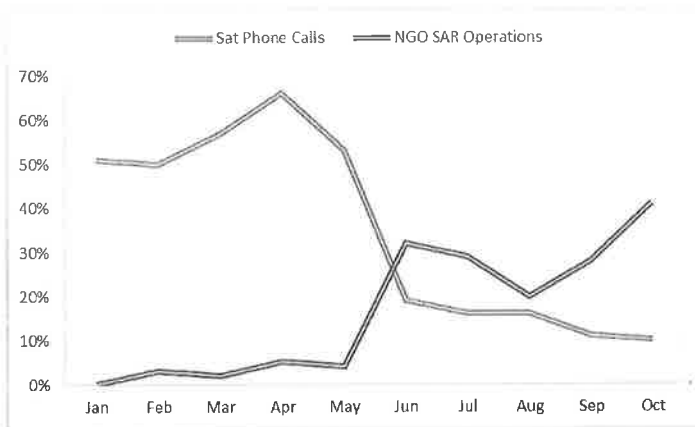
- The NGO vessels operating close to the Libyan territorial waters might be able to detect by radar the location of the migrant boats and proceed to rescue them.

• [TEXT REMOVED]

- [TEXT REMOVED] the NGOs boats have powerful lights switched on during the night which makes them visible from far even from the Libyan Coast and working as a beam for the migrants.

Commented [A1]: The non-disclosed text contains sensitive operational information which is used for risk analysis and in turn, operational decision making by the Agency. Disclosing this information publicly will undermine the effectiveness of Frontex operations as the risk analysis based on this information and used by Frontex to run its operations, would become common knowledge rather than intelligence to combat crime and prevent illegal cross-border activity. If this information were to become public moreover, the efforts carried out by the EU and Member States to curtail criminal activities would be jeopardized. Furthermore, there is a real risk that disclosing this information would be of benefit to the smuggling networks that would change their modus operandi accordingly, thus putting the life of migrants in danger. Its disclosure is therefore refused, as it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

Commented [A2]: The non-disclosed parts here and below on this page contain the sources of the information mentioned right below them. Disclosing such information would deter Frontex' partners from sharing information needed for risk analysis and operational decision making, with the Agency, and jeopardize the important cooperation established for operational activities, including search and rescue operations. Moreover, if Frontex' partners were to begin withholding such information, it would lessen the effectiveness of the work and efforts of the EU and Member States in preventing criminal activities and saving lives at sea. This would have as an effect to undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and for this reason, these parts have been removed based on the exception laid down in Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.



This chart shows the monthly percentage of Satellite Phone calls of migrants in distress received by MRCC Rome from January to October 2016, as well as the growing percentage of rescue operations performed by the NGOs during the same period of time

Information [TEXT REMOVED] during the past weekend suggests that some NGO vessels could be retrieving the engines from the migrant boats before the boats are left adrift (see images below). Moreover, the boats left adrift are full of life jackets, which most probably will be sold by the smuggling networks to the migrants.

In this set of images below it can be seen that NGOs are leaving the boats transporting migrants adrift, that they continue to leave life jackets on board and that they are collecting the engines from the migrant boats. In regards of this last issue (the engines) Frontex have requested information from the Italian Authorities that can confirm whether the engines are being delivered to them by NGOs vessels during the disembarkation of migrants in the different Italian ports.

[CONTENT REMOVED]

[TEXT REMOVED]

It is important to mention, that currently there are 15 NGO assets deployed in the Central Med (14 maritime and 1 aerial) more than double than last year. [TEXT REMOVED]

In addition, the following issues involving NGOs vessels have occurred in different disembarkation ports in Italy:

- NGOs personnel on board of vessels do not collect evidences from migrant boats, [TEXT REMOVED]
- Migrants who have been rescued by NGO vessels, when disembarked in Italian ports are not willing to cooperate [TEXT REMOVED]

Commented [A3]: The non-disclosed pictures reveal sensitive operational information, in particular the means of transportation used by smugglers as well as specific features of such means such as their size, type and preparation. These features are used for risk analysis and in turn for the preparation of the operational measures to counter cross-border crime and save lives at sea. Disclosing this information publicly will undermine the effectiveness of operations as the risk analysis based on this information and used by Frontex to run its operations, would become common knowledge rather than intelligence to combat crime and prevent illegal cross-border activity. If this information were to become public moreover, the efforts carried out by the EU and Member States to curtail criminal activities would be jeopardized. This would have as an effect to undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security and for this reason, these pictures have been removed based on the exception laid down in Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

Commented [A4]: The non-disclosed text here and below contains sensitive operational information which is used for risk analysis and in turn, operational decision making by the Agency. Disclosing this information publicly will undermine the effectiveness of Frontex operations as the risk analysis based on this information and used by Frontex to run its operations, would become common knowledge rather than intelligence to combat crime and prevent illegal cross-border activity. If this information were to become public the efforts carried out by the EU and Member States to curtail criminal activities would be jeopardized. Furthermore, there is a real risk that disclosing this information would be of benefit to the smuggling networks that would change their modus operandi accordingly, thus putting the life of migrants in danger. Its disclosure is therefore refused, as it would undermine the protection of the public interest as regards public security in the sense of Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

