GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR MARITIME SECURITY 2025–2028

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1. INTRODUCTION

Denmark is a nation with proud maritime traditions. Denmark is one of the world's leading maritime nations and it has a large maritime industry which is characterised by innovation and rapid technological development. Shipping is one of the country's biggest export sectors and, alongside the maritime industry – which consists of shipyards, equipment manufacturers, ship designers and service companies – it plays a key role as a value creator and growth engine for the Danish economy and Danish society.

Shipping is global by nature. Due to its prominent role in global maritime trade, Denmark has a particular interest in protecting the right to freedom of navigation and maritime security. Denmark's position within global shipping means that the absence of maritime security in some regions poses a serious threat to Danish interests, including the interests of shipping companies and crews.

However, the consequences of unsafe seaways extend beyond Danish interests alone. Over 80% of the goods transported globally are transported by sea, and two-thirds of the world's energy is either extracted at sea or transported by sea[1]. The absence of open, safe and free seaways is therefore important for world trade and security of supply as a whole. The consequences of maritime insecurity extend far beyond the maritime domain to affect other global sectors as well, such as the economy and our energy supply, therefore constituting a challenge to security policy. Moreover, a wide range of threats against maritime security stem from and contribute to regional instability in those areas where they occur.

Maritime security can be bolstered by addressing the threats, risks and challenges that exist within the maritime domain. Among other things, the maritime domain includes shipping routes, ports, coastal areas, off-shore installations and subsea infrastructures. In addition, it also encompasses the protection of the marine environment and of the users of the maritime domain, which is understood to mean the ships, their crews and their cargo.

Among other things, maritime security threats can arise from crime and they typically target or exploit shipping routes and commercial shipping operations. Examples include piracy and armed robbery at sea, as well as the illegal transportation of illicit items. In addition, it also includes threats which stem from criminal activity but which do not directly target commercial shipping, such as illegal fishing and the destruction of the marine environment through dumping, for example.

Other maritime security challenges arise from the actions of state or state-sponsored private actors. These include challenges which arise as a result of war, geopolitical rivalries or disagreements over border demarcations. In addition, new types of threats to maritime security are constantly on the rise. Among other things, these can take the form of deliberate violations of international rules and acts of sabotage against maritime infrastructure. As technological developments advance, we see a corresponding rise in threats such as cyberattacks targeting ships, ports and maritime infrastructure, for example.

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[1] EU Maritime Security Strategy, Joint Statement of 10 March 2023

2. PRINCIPLES AND FOCUS

A. PRINCIPLES

The international legal order is under pressure and the current geopolitical reality requires adjustments if we are to be able to continue defending and promoting Danish values and interests. As the government has defined in its Foreign and Security Policy Strategy[2], Denmark shall work towards a rules-based world order and compliance with international rules. This includes the rules set out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea[3], which aim to strike a balance between, on the one hand, the interests of coastal states in having control over their adjacent seas and, on the other hand, the interest of all states to be able to freely use the sea for navigation, etc.

The sea makes up more than two-thirds of the surface of the Earth, and maritime issues, including those related to maritime security, are often international in nature. Neither Denmark nor any other country can solve all maritime security challenges on its own. Effectively addressing the challenges which exist at sea requires a well-functioning degree of international cooperation. Denmark must continue to engage in the international and regional forums that address threats to maritime security, such as NATO, the EU, the United Nations, the United Nations International Maritime Organisation (IMO), and special coalitions as appropriate. In doing so, we can increase our international engagement, strengthen alliances and forge equal partnerships globally, as provided for in the government's Foreign and Security Policy Strategy, and in the government's Strategy for Enhanced Engagement with African Countries[4].

In summary, it can be said that Denmark's work in relation to maritime security will be based on three overarching principles.

THREE OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

1	2	3
Protect Danish maritime interests and support businesses in navigating an increasingly complex geopolitical reality	Protect the rules-based world order and compliance with international law	Promote multilateralism and international and regional collaborations to boost maritime security

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[2] Foreign and Security Policy Strategy, May 2023.

[3] United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS+ANNEXES+RES+AGREEMENT), 1982.

[4] Africa's Century – Strategy for Enhanced Danish Engagement with African Countries, August 2024.

B. PRIORITIES

The strategy places focus on *international* challenges related to maritime security, meaning maritime security threats that occur in areas beyond the Kingdom of Denmark's territorial waters and exclusive economic zone, in recognition of the fact that international challenges can have a direct impact on freedom of navigation. Focus is placed on the right of free navigation and thus any threats to maritime infrastructure (such as pipelines, cables, offshore wind turbines and other off-shore installations) are only covered to the extent that these threats also affect the right to freedom of navigation.

As the security scenario changes and develops, it is important to maintain a level of flexibility that enables Denmark to continuously adapt its efforts and respond effectively to new threats to the right to freedom of navigation.

This strategy builds on Denmark's experiences with maritime security and continues efforts against piracy, armed robbery at sea and maritime crime, which have been a priority for Denmark since the country's first strategy in 2011. Moreover, the strategy now, for the first time, also places focus on attacks against maritime transport by state-sponsored private actors, as a consequence of the increasing pressure on the rules-based world order. The strategy replaces previous strategic frameworks for Denmark's efforts relating to maritime security, including the Priority Paper for Denmark's Efforts against Piracy and Other Forms of Maritime Crime 2019–2022, the Strategy for Danish Efforts against Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea 2015–2018 and the Strategy for Danish Efforts against Piracy 2011–2014.

The strategy establishes the strategic direction for Denmark's work on the following key challenges for international maritime security and the right to freedom of navigation:[5]

The consequences of war and conflict on the right to free navigation

Criminal attacks against shipping vessels

Criminal exploitation of maritime vulnerabilities

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[5] The prioritised challenges have been chosen in order to target resource consumption and avoid any overlap with other strategic Danish initiatives such as work on security of supply or combating cyberthreats.

The three prioritised challenges are addressed in Section 3.

C. AREAS OF ACTION

In accordance with the three overarching principles of maritime security, and in order to effectively address the most serious threats to the right to freedom of navigation, a broad, coherent range of interventions, both military and civilian in nature, will be required. Denmark's efforts will be made within three strategic areas:

STRATEGIC AREAS OF ACTION

1 Maritime initiatives and activities

2 Partnerships on information sharing and the effective monitoring of the maritime domain

3 Capacity-building and international collaborations

The three areas of action are considered in Section 4.

UN LAW OF THE SEA CONVENTION (UNCLOS): THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION

The right to free navigation is an essential principle of maritime law and means that ships have the right to navigate freely and to cross the world's seas without the unnecessary interference of coastal states.

The right to free navigation is essential to global trade – meaning the transport of goods and people across the world's seas. It upholds the principle of open access to the seas and contributes to peace, stability, financial development and collaboration between nations.

3. THREATS TO MARITIME SECURITY

A.   WARS AND CONFLICTS

Wars and conflicts on land have an impact on maritime security. Both in the form of direct attacks and in the form of unintended consequences in that they can affect global supply chains, for example. It is also the case that maritime areas can be involved in conflicts in a way that restricts freedom of navigation in the affected areas. For example, as a result of direct combat actions or attacks. New conflicts may require swift action while simultaneously taking account of Denmark's role as a small country with an open economy that relies heavily on international trade.

The multi-year conflict in Yemen has had a particular impact on maritime security in both the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, where civilian ships have faced armed attacks while passing through. The maritime security situation in and around the Red Sea deteriorated significantly in November 2023 when the Yemeni Houthi movement, citing the rekindled conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, began conducting attacks against civilian shipping in the area. These attacks have been extensive and technically sophisticated, involving the use of helicopters, aerial drones and unmanned surface vehicles, missiles, propelled grenades and high-speed boats. The increased risk associated with navigation in the Red Sea and the Gulf

of Aden has had an impact on the number of commercial vessels choosing to change routes and to instead sail south of Africa and via the Gulf of Guinea.

ATTACKS AGAINST CIVILIAN SHIPS IN THE RED SEA

The Houthi movement carried out its first attack on 19 November 2023, when the Bahamas-flagged vehicle carrier Galaxy Leader was boarded and its crew were taken hostage. The UN International Maritime Organisation (IMO) estimates conservatively that around 70 ships have been attacked in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden between then and early October 2024. This includes some of the roughly 2,500 Danish-operated ships that pass through the area each year. Two ships have been sunk, crew members have lost their lives and damaged ships – especially oil tankers – pose a considerable risk to the environment. Overall, shipping traffic through the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the Red Sea has declined by around 50%. Instead, many ships take a longer route to the south of Africa which is both more expensive and entails higher carbon emissions. It also puts the ships at risk of more treacherous weather conditions and of pirate attacks. The financial consequences of Houthi attacks on global trade are considerable, but they also have a hard-hitting impact on the countries around the Red Sea. For example, Egypt, which relies on income from the Suez Canal.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 once again brought war to Europe and ushered in a new foreign and security political reality that has also had an impact on maritime security. The situation in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov is heavily affected by the war, with traffic both to and from Ukraine and Russia being put at risk by mines and combat operations. Missiles and drifting naval mines pose a threat to ships and crews, and the war has also restricted the right to freedom of navigation in these waters.

Denmark has a particular interest in ensuring that the waters closest to us are both open and safe. This is especially true in the Baltic Sea, where rising tensions in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine have prompted a heightened degree of preparedness in response to increased levels of Russian activity. In addition, Russia's so-called 'shadow fleet' is also a cause for concern in that Russia uses old and probably insufficiently insured vessels with opaque ownership conditions, which poses major risks to the marine environment and to maritime safety.

Political tensions around the Taiwan Strait have also increased over the past few years. This has meant an increasing degree of political pressure on Taiwan from China, as well as increased Chinese military presence in the area, including large-scale military exercises. Increased tensions are being experienced in the South China Sea and in the East China Sea. The impact of this on civilian shipping in both areas has so far been modest. In the event of increased tensions and an escalation into an armed conflict, it must be expected that the right to freedom of navigation will be curtailed.

In crises, and ultimately in war, the combined resources and capabilities of a state can be used to maintain sovereignty and exercise power. From a Danish perspective, this could, in principle, also extend to the civilian merchant navy. The new security situation also means a renewed focus on safeguarding transatlantic maritime supply routes, including routes to Greenland and the Faroe Islands. In addition, it will also clearly be in Denmark's interests to ensure that the civilian merchant navy can continue to operate in the event of war.

THE RED SEA: OPERATION PROSPERITY GUARDIAN AND ASPIDES

In the wake of unprovoked attacks from the Houthi movement, which began in the autumn and winter of 2023 and target ships in and around the Red Sea, the USA took the initiative to establish a military operation by the name of Operation Prosperity Guardian. This was established under the existing international maritime coalition, the Combined Maritime Forces, to which Denmark has been contributing officers since 2008. Shortly after, in February 2024, the EU launched a military operation by the name of ASPIDES. Both operations are defensive in nature and have a mandate to escort and protect civilian shipping traffic against attacks, and thus to uphold the right of free navigation in the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the Gulf of Aden. In the beginning of 2024, Denmark sent the frigate Iver Huitfeldt to support Operation Prosperity Guardian, and Denmark has also contributed staff officers to both operations.

Foto: Anders V. Fridberg / Forsvaret

State-sponsored private actors increasingly pose a challenge by carrying out attacks that typically have a purpose other than enrichment, often in connection with a geopolitical rivalry. For example, this is the case in the Strait of Hormuz, which is a strategically important hub for international commercial shipping. Oil tankers in particular have, in a number of cases, been diverted or attacked and detained — often for extended periods — by the Iranian authorities.

The threat to freedom of navigation in and around the Strait of Hormuz is largely due to long-standing and deep-seated regional conflicts. These conflicts are characterised by a series of complex dynamics between state actors in the region and they largely arise from differing security policy interests and ethnic-religious differences. Shifts in regional balances, such as the relationship between Israel and its neighbours, or between Iran and Saudi Arabia, can quickly affect the maritime security situation around the Strait of Hormuz.

Moreover, state and state-sponsored private actors will often have the resources to conduct actions that are impossible or difficult to attribute to the actor.

The maritime sector is not significantly different from other sectors when it comes to cyberthreats. The threat scenario is constantly evolving. New players are emerging while others are disappearing, and hackers are constantly developing new methods of attack. Denmark's Centre for Cyber Security general assessments of the country's threat level — in relation to cyberespionage, cybercrime, cyberactivism, destructive cyberattacks and cyberterrorism — will therefore also apply to the maritime sector as a starting point. Maritime cyberattacks can originate from both government and state-sponsored private actors, but they can also come from opportunistic, private actors in the form of ransomware attacks, for example. The current assessment is that there are no specific cyber and information security threats targeting the maritime sector in general, nor are there any cyberthreats that are directly targeting Danish-flagged vessels. The threat of destructive attacks against Denmark in 2024 was assessed as having increased, and thus as being moderate, and this also implies an increased threat level to the maritime sector. The threat emanates primarily from state-sponsored hackers, but non-state hackers with varying degrees of state affiliations also pose a threat.

EAST COAST OF MEXICO

SINGAPORE AND MALACCA STRAIT

GULF OF GUINEA

COAST OF PERU

COAST OF SOMALIA

Attacks by criminals continue to pose a very high threat to seafarers. This includes both piracy and armed robbery at sea, among other things.

PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AT SEA

Somewhat simplistically, piracy can be defined as any unlawful act of violence, retention or plundering committed for personal gain against another ship that takes place outside the territorial waters of a country. Armed robbery at sea, on the other hand, can be defined as pirate actions within the territorial waters of another country.

UNCLOS Article 101 and IMO Resolution A.1025(26)

The number of pirate attacks in the Gulf of Guinea was on the rise for a number of years up to 2020, however it has since been in decline. These attacks have occurred throughout the entire region and often in international waters. Danish-operated ships navigating in the Gulf of Guinea make some use of private security measures in order to counter the risk of pirate attacks, including armed guards. Due to legislative differences across the various coastal states, it is not possible to adopt the same precautions and safety measures in all locations.

TABLE 1: REPORTED ATTACKS IN THE GULF OF GUINEA FROM 2019 TO 2024

Year	Attacks
2019	64
2020	82
2021	34
2022	19
2023	22
Q3 2024	12
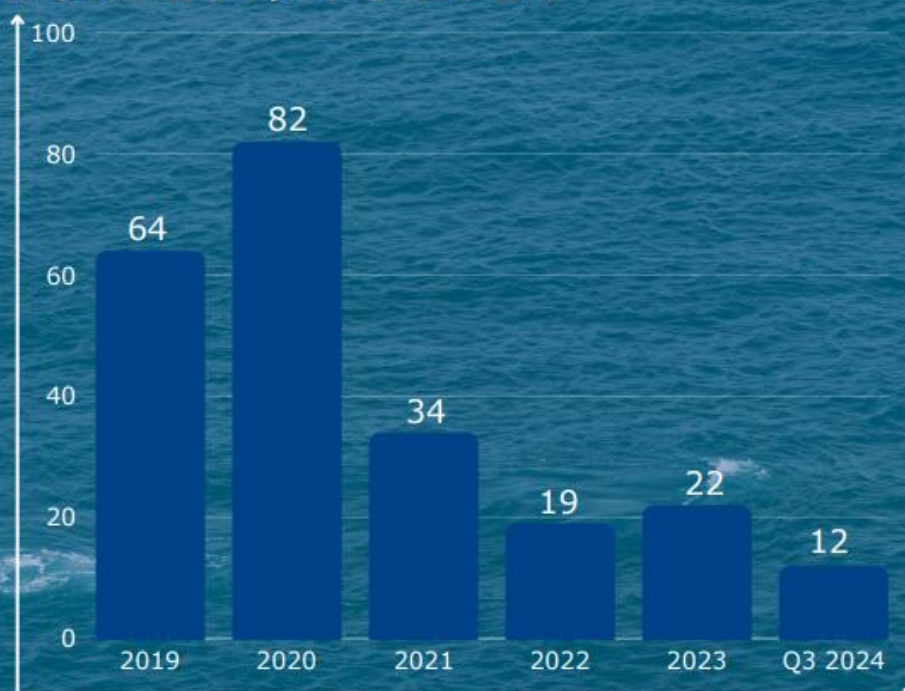
KSource: International Chamber of Commerce, IMB Piracy Reporting Centre
Note: 2024 is up to and including September.

Pirate attacks in the Gulf of Guinea resulting in the kidnapping of crew members are often carried out by criminals originating from the Niger Delta in southern Nigeria. Work is ongoing to continuously assess the capacity, capability and intention of criminals in the Niger Delta to carry out attacks against international ships where the aim is to kidnap the crew or hijack the vessel. The risk of pirate attacks is therefore still assessed to be high and it could further increase rapidly in the Gulf of Guinea.

The decline in pirate attacks since 2021 may be due to several factors. Among other things, there has been an increase in oil theft during this period, with oil theft being considered a less risky and more lucrative activity compared to piracy. There is therefore a risk that increased efforts aimed at preventing oil theft may entail a rise in piracy as an alternative source of income.

In addition, several of the root causes of piracy, such as poor employment opportunities, corruption, and lacking enforcement of the law by the state, continue to persist.

Furthermore, limitations in the maritime military resources of coastal states, and the fact that land-based security threats are also competing for political attention, make it difficult for some states in the region to control territorial waters, and especially international waters. Therefore, despite both international and regional actions, there is insufficient naval military presence to deter and prevent pirate attacks in the Gulf of Guinea.

The piracy situation off Somalia's coast in the Horn of Africa has been under scrutiny for an extended period. Not a single successful pirate attack was carried out for a number of years. It was on this basis that, on 1 January 2023, the maritime industry made the decision to remove its categorisation of the Indian Ocean as a high-risk area. The reason for the decline in piracy was thought to be a combination of the anti-piracy measures adopted by the shipping companies, including the use of armed guards, and the international naval presence. Also of significance were onshore efforts that created jobs and offered support to individuals who wanted to leave extremist movements such as Al-Shabaab, and which made it easier to bring pirates to justice.

TABLE 2: REPORTED ATTACKS IN THE WATERS OFF EAST AFRICA FROM 2019 TO 2024

Year	Reported attacks
2019	4
2020	4
2021	2
2022	0
2023	16
Q3 2024	54
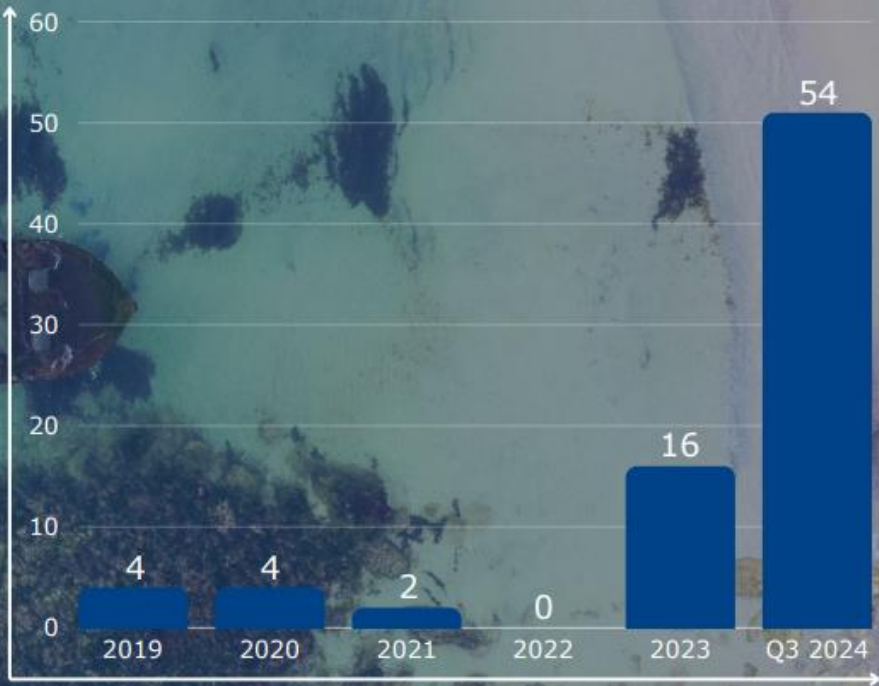
Source: International Maritime Organisation
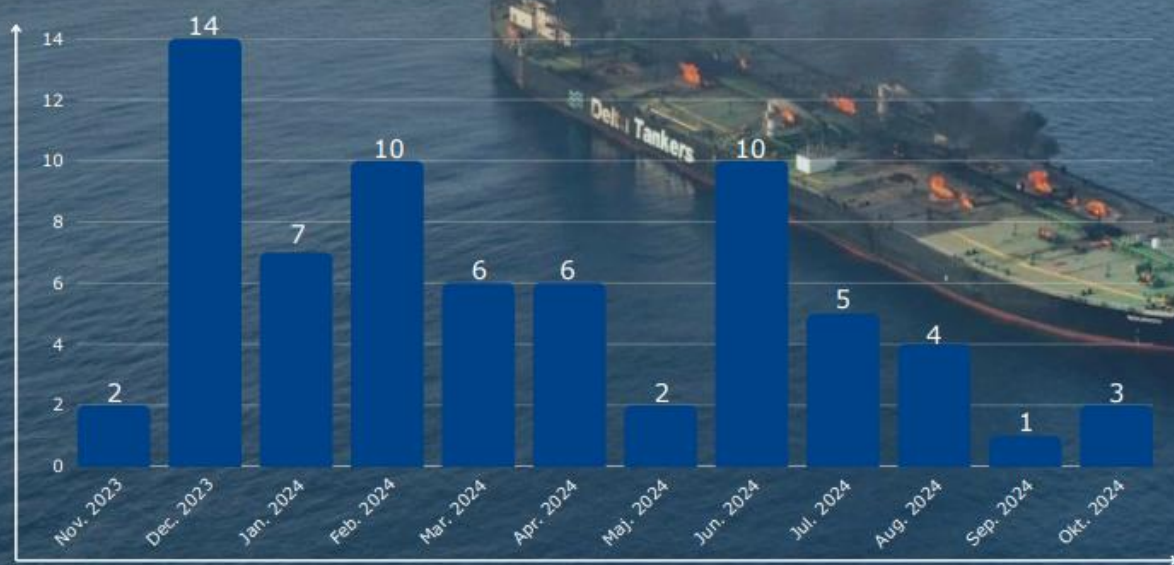Note: 2024 is up to and including October.

In late 2023, however, pirate attacks resumed in the waters off the Horn of Africa. These developments can be seen as indications that the root causes of piracy in Somalia have only

been remedied to a limited extent, and that there is still a breeding ground for criminal recruitment targeting civilian shipping.

The maritime security situation in and around the Red Sea has meant favourable conditions for new pirate attacks, as the international naval presence has been focused on the threat posed by the Houthi movement, with anti-piracy efforts having been downgraded as a result.


TABLE 3: REPORTED ATTACKS IN THE RED SEA FROM 2019 TO 2024

Source: International Maritime Organisation
Note: 2024 is up to and including October
European Union, 2024

Attacks against civilian shipping can also be seen in a number of other waters. For example, this is the case in the Indo-Pacific region, where there has been a general increase in attacks against merchant ships in the Malacca and Singapore Straits since 2018. These are among the world's most heavily trafficked straits, connecting the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, and they constitute an important link between Europe and the Far East. It is estimated that about 30% of the world's global trade, measured by volume, passes through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

TABLE 4: REPORTED ATTACKS IN THE SINGAPORE AND MALACCA STRAIT FROM 2019 TO 2024
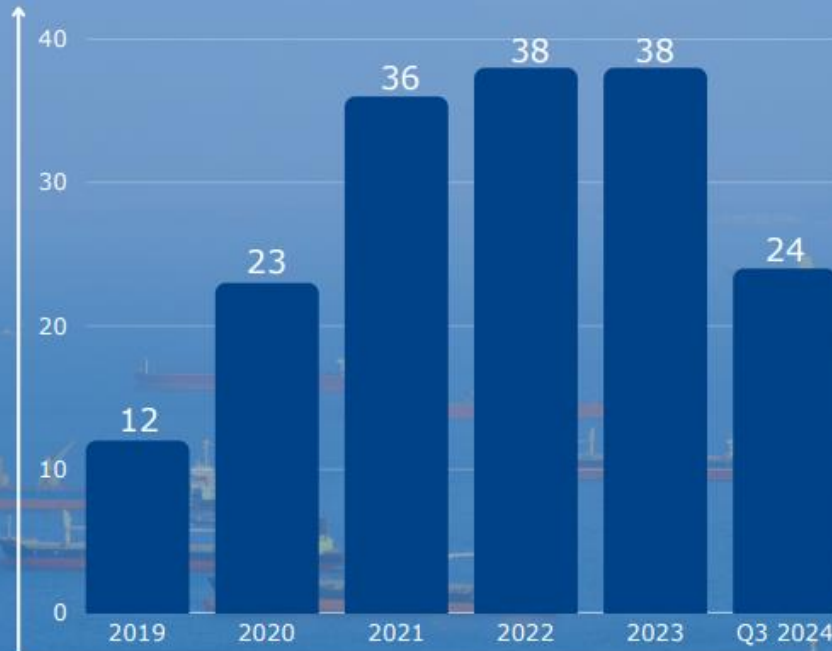
Source: International Chamber of Commerce, IMB Piracy Reporting Centre.
Note: 2024 is up to and including September.

Similarly, criminal attacks against shipping vessels are also taking place in Latin American waters, including along the southern part of Mexico's east coast, off Ecuador and at the Callao anchorage in Peru. These attacks most often take the form of acquisitive attacks such as the robbery of ships and seafarers.

C. EXPLOITATION OF VULNERABILITIES BY CRIMINALS

Maritime trade routes are not only used for legal transport. Criminals also use the seaways for the purpose of smuggling people and goods, including weapons, drugs and fuel.

Vulnerabilities in maritime transport are exploited by criminal groups all over the world. For example, large-scale smuggling of various kinds occurs in the waters off the Horn of Africa, including the Gulf of Aden and the east coast of Africa, where armed groups in the region are supported by smuggling activities, which thereby contribute to the continuation of local and regional conflicts, as well as militant extremist groups.

Similarly, large quantities of drugs are being transported out of Latin America in particular. Trafficking poses a direct threat to civilian shipping. Ships are unwittingly exploited to carry illegal goods, either in the cargo hold or elsewhere on board the ship, in part because criminal groups exploit the fact that the destination countries are generally only able to search a limited proportion of the cargo transported globally. The consequences of having illegal goods on board, such as drugs, can — in addition to causing disruption to the normal operation and running of the ship — be very serious. There have been examples of crew members being imprisoned and ships being impounded as a result of illegal goods being carried onboard. The criminals engaged in smuggling activities may pose a threat to crews in situations such as loading and unloading of illegal goods, for example.

Some maritime smuggling routes, including those used to transport drugs to Europe, go via West African countries, including coastal countries in the Gulf of Guinea, where there has been a rise in seizures, especially of cocaine. Smuggling routes can contribute to the strengthening and financing of organised criminal groups in the areas affected, and they contribute to destabilisation and corruption, exerting negative effects on maritime security and security at ports. At the same time, drug smuggling is the main source of funding for organised crime in Denmark and Europe.

The organised smuggling of humans and the use of unsafe maritime routes by irregular migrants can also have significant consequences for the normal operation and running of ships and commercial shipping vessels. This is due to international obligations to come to the rescue of persons in need at sea which are stipulated by, among others, the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea[6]. However, there have been examples where a commercial ship which had come to the rescue of persons in need and taken them on board did not subsequently have the opportunity to put the migrants in need ashore. Although maritime migrant routes only pose a direct security threat to commercial shipping and crews to a limited extent, there is nonetheless a very high human risk to migrants using unsafe routes across waters such as the Mediterranean Sea, among others.

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[6] International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974.

4. DENMARK'S STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

In its work within the area of maritime security, Denmark uses a wide and cohesive range of measures that are both military and civilian in nature.

Militarily, Denmark's efforts consist, in their most visible form, of the deployment of military interventions such as ships and surveillance aircraft which serve to deter and minimise threats, as well as the deployment of staff officers and special operations forces for international operations. The interventions can also have a preventive or capacity-building impact by providing education and training support to state authorities and structures within the framework of the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund. Furthermore, operations via cyberspace can also be launched, including those with a deterrent effect. Denmark's military efforts also consist of continuous monitoring and the sharing of knowledge and intelligence in relation to developments within Denmark's areas of interest.

On the civilian side, Denmark's efforts consist of supporting and cooperating with bilateral and regional actors to address maritime security threats through Denmark's stabilisation and development efforts, among others. Responding to international threats to maritime security requires well-functioning international cooperation.

Denmark is a member of a number of international forums in which issues of maritime security are addressed. An important example is the UN's International Maritime Organisation (IMO), of which Denmark has been a member since 1959. In the IMO, Denmark works to influence the international regulation of maritime navigation, including as regards maritime cyber and information security, as well as the safeguarding of ships with a view to preventing piracy, etc. In 2024, the IMO adopted a resolution on the security situation in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden as a result of the Houthi movement's attacks on civilian shipping in the area. In 2022, Denmark also worked to secure the adoption of a resolution stressing the international obligations of port and coastal states to accept distressed persons rescued at sea.

Denmark is an elected member of the UN Security Council for the period 2025–2026. Membership gives Denmark an exceptional opportunity to promote the Council's work on maritime security. In the Council, Denmark will have the opportunity to work to ensure that the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea remains the central basis within international law for regulating all activities at sea, that regional ownership of maritime security is improved and that the safety of crews is strengthened. Denmark will also be able to specifically follow up on Resolution 2634 of 2022 on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea[7] and on Resolutions 2722 and 2739 of 2024 on armed attacks against ships in the Red Sea[8].

Maritime security is also discussed in other international forums such as NATO and the EU, and Denmark engages in the various collaborations and forums that make up these collaborations.

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[7] UN Security Council Resolution 2634 (2022).
[8] UN Security Council Resolution 2722 (2024) and UN Security Council Resolution 2739 (2024).

In 2023, the EU adopted a Maritime Security Strategy with an accompanying Action Plan[9]. The strategy bolsters the wide range of tools at the EU's disposal to promote maritime security, both civilian and military. The strategy thus strengthens the EU's role as a maritime security provider and serves as a framework for the steps needed to protect maritime interests, citizens, values and the economy. The strategy is implemented by the EU and EU Member States in accordance with their respective competences. Denmark has actively participated in the elaboration of the strategy and will play an active role in its implementation. Denmark's strategic work on maritime security will therefore also be undertaken with the objectives of the EU strategy in mind.

The Danish network of diplomatic missions abroad plays an important role in the effective implementation of Danish maritime security efforts on both the military and civilian sides. The presence of deployed diplomats, defence attachés and of military, civilian and maritime advisers is central to our ability to follow and raise agendas and actions locally.

The root causes of maritime security challenges are almost always rooted in land-based conditions. An effective response to the challenges must therefore include actions on land that are adapted to local conditions, target the complex and often dynamic nature of the challenges, keep the interests of the countries involved in mind and involve regional forums.

In accordance with Denmark's fundamental principles of maritime security, and in order to effectively address the most serious threats to the right to freedom of navigation, efforts must be concentrated in three strategic areas: A) Maritime operations and activities; B) Partnerships for information sharing and the effective monitoring of the maritime domain, and C) Capacity building and international cooperation.

A. EFFORTS AND ACTIVITIES AT SEA

Experiences with counter-piracy efforts off both the west and east coasts of Africa have shown that an international naval presence can be an effective tool in addressing threats posed by criminal attacks against shipping. However, the new security situation in Europe has led to an increased need for the use of Danish military capabilities closer to Denmark, and this only underlines the importance of international partnerships and cooperation in order to ensure a maritime presence.

Since 2008, Denmark has contributed military capabilities to combat maritime crime and, in particular, piracy. These contributions have consisted of Danish naval contributions, among other things, and they have occurred as part of international operations and national deployments. Among other things, Denmark has contributed militarily to NATO's *Operation Ocean Shield* and it continues to contribute in other ways to the *Combined Maritime Forces Task Force* in the Horn of Africa. Denmark also deployed a frigate to counter piracy in the Gulf of Guinea from November 2021 to February 2022, and to protect civilian shipping in the Red Sea in February and March 2024. In addition, Denmark continuously contributes to NATO's

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[9] EU Maritime Security Strategy and Action Plan, October 2023.

standing naval forces, which contribute to maritime security in the immediate vicinity of Denmark, across the Atlantic and in other focus areas[10].

Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen aboard Iver Huitfeldt.

NATO's maritime activities cover all three of the alliance's core tasks: Deterrence and defence, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security. NATO's naval forces provide the alliance with a continuous, credible and flexible maritime capability that can be rapidly deployed in a crisis or conflict situation. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, naval forces have increasingly been deployed to bolster NATO's maritime presence in the immediate area. Coordination and cooperation with partner countries, including through NATO's Maritime and Joint Exercise Programme, increases interoperability and improves core warfighting competencies, demonstrating credible deterrence in the maritime domain. In the maritime sphere, NATO also cooperates with the United Nations and the European Union, as well as other regional organisations, such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the African Union.

Maritime transport is critical to connecting North America with Europe, and NATO is therefore working on the development of a new concept for strategic maritime transport to ensure that NATO has access to a sufficient degree of maritime transport capacity in order to deploy and support forces and civil society in Europe. This work is complemented by similar EU initiatives. The Danish merchant navy represents approximately one seventh of NATO's total ocean-

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[10] NATO emphasizes that the standing naval forces have an inherent mission in regards to maritime security in the context of their continuous presence. Focus is on the waters outside national territorial waters, where their task is, among other things, to enforce the right of free navigation and to pursue capacity building in the field of maritime security.

traversing merchant fleet, and Denmark thus makes one of the largest contributions to NATO's transport capacity.

Asia and the Indo-Pacific region is increasingly an economic hub. At the same time, the region is increasingly subject to both geopolitical and local security tensions, including hotspots which are rooted in territorial claims. Denmark and the rest of Europe could be directly affected both economically and in terms of security by any escalation, and regional stability could be challenged. In order to boost the insight of the Armed Forces into the region, a staff officer will be deployed to the *United States Indo-Pacific Command* (INDOPACOM) from 2025.

The EU Security and Defence Strategy sets out an ambition for the EU to play a greater role in the world's oceans, including in relation to security. This applies both inside and outside the EU. The abolition of the Danish EU defence opt-out in a referendum on 1 June 2022 means that Denmark has the opportunity to participate fully in European cooperation on defence and security, including cooperation in the maritime sphere and in EU naval operations. Denmark will actively promote the development of the EU's role as a maritime security provider, including on the African continent, through participation in EU maritime security initiatives.

The EU's *Coordinated Maritime Presences* initiative of 2021 has provided EU Member States with a flexible framework for optimising the use of their maritime military capabilities in the selected maritime areas of interest. Denmark shall remain committed to the development of the EU's *Coordinated Maritime Presences*.

In response to the armed attacks launched by the Yemeni Houthi movement against civilian shipping traffic in the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the Gulf of Aden in November 2023, the EU launched a naval military operation by the name of *ASPIDES* in February 2024. Denmark has contributed a staff officer to *ASPIDES*, which, like the US-led *Operation Prosperity Guardian*, is a defensive operation with a mandate to accompany and protect civilian shipping traffic in the area from attack, among other things.

Denmark shall contribute to efforts in the EU that address irregular migration and help to secure the EU's maritime borders, and Denmark shall also support cooperation between European coastguard functions. This will be done via the EU border and coast guard agency FRONTEX, among others. Here, Denmark will continue its contribution to pan-European control of the EU's external borders, which is important for both EU and Danish border management and security. This includes operations in the Mediterranean focused on monitoring and controlling irregular migration by sea, combating cross-border crime and providing maritime rescue support.

Previous experiences with piracy and with maritime crime show that an important element has been the security measures taken by the ships, including the establishment of safe rooms, bulletproof doors and armed guards. Denmark will work to ensure that private companies have the opportunity to take appropriate security measures themselves.

B. PARTNERSHIPS ON INFORMATION SHARING AND EFFECTIVE MONITORING OF THE MARITIME DOMAIN

Monitoring of the maritime domain — *Maritime Domain Awareness* — is essential in order to have a complete picture of the threats to maritime security and thus enable proactive actions to address them. Because maritime security challenges are complex and characterised by the fact that they often cross international borders and take place in international waters, close information exchange between all relevant actors is important to ensure the effective monitoring of the maritime domain.

Denmark supports measures to strengthen monitoring of the maritime domain and increase the exchange of information in the maritime domain. Denmark does this by engaging in international collaborations to bolster the ability of national and regional authorities to effectively monitor their maritime domains.

One example is the international platform by the name of *Shared Awareness and De-confliction* (SHADE), which has been an effective forum for the exchange of information and experiences on matters such as counter-piracy in the Horn of Africa. Another example is Denmark's support for the regional maritime security architecture in the Gulf of Guinea, the *Yaoundé Code of Conduct* and Architecture, the regional maritime security structure along the east coast of Africa (the *Djibouti Code of Conduct* and its *Jeddah Amendment*), as well as the

information sharing networks developed by the EU, YARIS, IORIS and the *Common Information Sharing Environment for the Maritime Domain* (CISE).

MARITIME DOMAIN AWARENESS

Maritime domain awareness is defined by the UN's International Maritime Organisation as the effective monitoring and understanding of all events relating to the maritime domain that could have an impact on our security, the economy or the environment. Maritime domain awareness enables the early identification of potential threats at sea.

Denmark will continue to participate in relevant forums and to exchange experience on operational matters and policy development within maritime security, including in relation to new security challenges. Denmark will actively participate in and promote measures that can contribute to a complete picture of the threats to maritime security, and it will explore options for increasing public-private cooperation in this area.

Denmark cooperates closely with the *European Maritime Safety Agency* (EMSA). This agency provides technical and operational support to the Commission and the Member States. It constitutes a central part of the work being undertaken to monitor the maritime domain in the EU, with EMSA monitoring European waters through the use of satellites, drones, and other similar technologies. In addition, the agency also assists the Commission in its monitoring of Member State implementation of maritime safety rules. EMSA leads the development of the CISE and cooperates with the *European Defence Agency* (EDA) to enable the exchange of information between the CISE and the EDA's *Maritime Surveillance Network* (MARSUR).

As Asia is the destination for a large part of Danish shipping exports outside of Europe, maritime security in this area is of great interest to Denmark. Denmark has been a member of the *Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia* (ReCAAP) since 2010. ReCAAP collects data and provides a detailed overview of

all incidents, and it presents the latest trends in maritime crime in Asia. Denmark continues to prioritise its participation in ReCAAP.

DENMARK'S KEY ACTIONS AS A PART OF ITS INFORMATION SHARING PARTNERSHIPS

Active engagement in international and regional forums with a view to improving the monitoring of the maritime domain and ensuring effective information sharing.

Backing of the EU's objective to be a leader in the monitoring of the maritime domain, as established in the EU's Maritime Security Strategy.

Explore potential bilateral agreements within areas such as information sharing and work for greater levels of public-private collaboration on monitoring and information sharing.

C. CAPACITY BUILDING AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Denmark will continue its involvement in capacity building and training activities which seek to equip partners to effectively carry out the national and regional monitoring of their maritime domains. Denmark will explore opportunities to contribute to the improvement of the response capacity of coastal states and of regional coordination. In addition, Denmark will also support the implementation of strategies that promote environmentally sustainable and resource-sustainable, so-called 'blue' (sea-based), economies in regions where the potential for this is underutilised, such as the Gulf of Guinea and off the Horn of Africa.

Cooperation with African countries will be based on the government's strategy for enhanced Danish engagement with African countries, which emphasises the need for engagement characterised by equal partnerships in solving common problems. The efforts therefore take their starting point in the wishes and priorities of the cooperating countries, and this includes placing focus on the root causes of maritime insecurity. Denmark works to promote African solutions to African challenges and thus supports the desire of African countries to take responsibility for their own security. In order to fulfil this ambition, Denmark must, to a greater extent, contribute to boosting and developing the EU's position on the continent, in part by contributing to joint EU efforts.

In the Gulf of Guinea, the Danish Armed Forces have been engaged in capacity building and training activities which aim to combat maritime crime, and especially piracy, since 2016. These efforts take place under the auspices of the Regional Maritime Peace and Stabilisation Programme. One of the focus areas of this engagement has been to strengthen the abilities and capabilities of coastal states to respond to maritime piracy incidents. In order to achieve this, the Danish Frogman Corps, together with the United States, has trained tactical units from Nigeria, Ghana, Benin and Togo in operations planning, the laws of war, tactical movements, the boarding of ships, collecting evidence and first aid. Denmark has also contributed to making Ghana and Nigeria 'regional centres of excellence' in maritime security training, and it is continuing this cooperation bilaterally. This has been achieved through the establishment of special training facilities "Ship in a Box" in the two countries. In Ghana, Denmark has also contributed to the establishment of a simulator for use in navigation training at the training centre of the Ghanaian Navy.

Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen at the opening of the Ship in a Box training facility in Accra, Ghana.

DENMARK'S MARITIME SECURITY PROGRAMME IN THE GULF OF GUINEA

The third phase of Denmark's maritime security programme in the Gulf of Guinea covers the period 2022–2026. The programme places focus on increasing the capacity of selected coastal states to combat piracy and other forms of maritime criminality, so that the countries can better uphold security and enforce maritime law, for example, by arresting and prosecuting pirates. The programme also facilitates a cohesive national and regional approach to maritime security through research, dialogue and capacity-building. The programme has a budget of DKK 175 million and is active in six countries around the Gulf of Guinea: Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Ivory Coast, Togo and Cameroon.

An important element of the anti-piracy efforts being undertaken off the Horn of Africa are the legal efforts that have been made to establish ways to prosecute individuals accused of piracy and to subsequently ensure they serve sentences. This international effort, in which Denmark has played a central role, has yielded very good results and it has also shown that effective law enforcement against maritime crime requires the ability to investigate and prosecute criminals.

Denmark will continue to work to strengthen both administration and judicial practice in areas where maritime crime is highest. Among other things, this concerns the prosecution of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, which is also provided for by the UN Security Council. This means that Denmark will work to enable coastal states in the Gulf of Guinea to prosecute criminals involved in piracy and/or armed robbery at sea, and that such criminals can be handed over to be prosecuted and serve sentences locally in accordance with Denmark's international obligations. Moreover, as part of the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, Denmark will also continue to support national and regional frameworks which protect women's rights in the maritime sector as well as the participation of women in maritime security. This work will be carried out in close cooperation with international partners, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Interpol and the *Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre* in Ghana.

DENMARK'S PEACE AND STABILISATION PROGRAMME FOR THE HORN OF AFRICA

Denmark launched its Peace and Stabilisation Programme for the Horn of Africa in 2011 in order to build the capacity of local authorities to patrol their own waters. Denmark continues to support the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Kenyan navy with the same aim, as focus resulting from the downward curve for piracy also encompasses the cross-border criminality which takes place on land. Denmark's efforts facilitate work to implement the UN Security Council's Resolution on Somalia on fighting criminality both on land and at sea.

In cooperation with relevant national and international actors, Denmark and the Danish police will also work to prevent and to combat crime that uses, exploits or threatens maritime infrastructure. International crime-fighting cooperation will be anchored namely under the auspices of Interpol and Europol, in accordance with Denmark's special status within the European police cooperation. It will also be anchored through the country's participation in relevant activities, including those that take their starting point from the *European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats* (EMPACT) and which implement the EU's priorities for combating organised and serious international crime.

Denmark will continue to participate actively in regional and international maritime forums that put maritime security issues on the agenda. These are in the Arctic and North Atlantic (*Arctic Coast Guard Forum* and *North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum*), the Gulf of Guinea (Yaoundé Architecture*, G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea*), along the eastern coast of Africa (*Djibouti Code of Conduct — Jeddah Amendment*, *Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities*, CGIMA and SHADE) and in Asia (*Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia* (ReCAAP)), and it will also participate in maritime platforms such as the Atlantic Centre. Denmark will work to maintain a political focus on maritime security issues within both regional and international organisations.

As maritime security challenges are almost always rooted in land-based conditions, any effective response to the threats must also target conditions on land. This is true in relation to the underlying causes of maritime crime, to geopolitical tensions and to rivalries which are of significance to the maritime domain. Denmark, in cooperation with regional and international partners, will work to address the conditions on land that contribute to insecurity in the maritime domain. This requires us to know and understand the underlying structures that enable and contribute to maritime insecurity. It also requires the elements that can result in maritime security to be considered together and integrated into Denmark's stabilisation and development efforts in relevant areas where maritime crime originates. Denmark will therefore continue to target land-based measures that address the root causes that contribute to maritime insecurity and it will continue to contribute to research in this area, for example via the maritime component of the Peace and Stabilisation Programme in the Horn of Africa, which funds research into areas of significance for maritime security.

DENMARK'S KEY ACTIONS AS A PART OF ITS CAPACITY-BUILDING WORK AND REGIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Strengthen Denmark's role in international and regional collaborations concerning maritime security.

Strengthen and expand the EU's role in Africa with a view to becoming the preferred partner of African countries in matters pertaining to maritime security on the continent.

Support an equal approach to collaborating with African partners and facilitate African solutions to African problems, thereby facilitating the wish of African nations to take responsibility for their own security.

Support the development of national capacities to participate in regional maritime security collaborations and effectively counter maritime security threats through training efforts, among other things.

Work to maintain a continued focus on maritime security issues in regional and international fora.

Address the root causes of piracy with a focus on poverty, weak institutions, corruption, smuggling, climate change, and environmental degradation.

Support police deployments under EU and UN missions, that build capacity through training to ensure peace and stability while preventing and combating organised crime that threatens maritime security.

Work to strengthen the possibility of local prosecution of piracy and other maritime crimes, including entering into transfer agreements with relevant coastal states.

5. IMPLEMENTING AUTHORITIES AND AUDIT MECHANISM

The strategy will guide Denmark's efforts to promote maritime security between 2025 and 2028.

It will be implemented through a number of concrete measures, and maritime security challenges shall also be considered, where relevant, in all other existing measures.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and its associated missions will have the overall responsibility for a number of Denmark's civil initiatives under the strategy. Among other things, this will include development-oriented initiatives on land and responsibility for the coordination of Denmark's interests in a number of international forums. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also responsible for matters related to the law of the sea. In connection with the establishment of a contact group for maritime security, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will carry out its secretarial function.

The Ministry of Defence will be responsible for the implementation of the strategy within the military domain, working closely with both the civilian and military authorities within and outside the purview of the Ministry of Defence. Among other things, it will be possible to implement relevant military initiatives on the basis of political decisions in order to protect the freedom of navigation.

The Danish Defence Intelligence Service (DDIS) will also contribute to the implementation of the strategy by providing the intelligence basis which will inform Danish foreign, security and defence policy. The mission of the DDIS is, among other things, to warn about and contribute to the countering of threats to Danish interests. The DDIS thus supports the first overarching principle of the strategy.

The Danish Maritime Authority, under the auspices of the Ministry of Business and Industry, oversees the procedures required by the EU for the safeguarding of ships flying the flag of Denmark on international voyages, while the Danish Civil Aviation and Railway Authority oversees the port facilities in connection with the arrival of ships to Danish ports (ISPS Regulation) with a view to preventing terrorist acts against ships or their ports of call. The procedures also contribute to the prevention or deterrence of piracy and armed assaults. The authority also cooperates with shipping companies, the relevant professional organisations and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the event of specific incidents. The Danish Maritime Authority is responsible for Denmark's interests within the IMO in general, including the updating of the organisation's guidance on the prevention of piracy and in relation to measures to promote the cybersecurity of ships. In addition to the formalised cooperation in the EU on maritime security, the Danish Maritime Authority is also involved in a number of bilateral collaborations and international forums which are aimed at preventing and gathering knowledge about terrorism and piracy. Finally, the Danish Maritime Authority has also

established the Maritime Cyber and Information Security Unit, which serves as a unifying communication point for cyber and information security across the entire maritime sector.

The National Police, under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice, sets the direction for and coordinates the police's contributions within the international sphere, placing particular focus on multilateral, international police collaborations on cross-border crime, border management and international security.

The maritime domain is complex and new threats can arise continuously. Over the course of the strategy, the relevant Danish authorities will therefore continuously take stock of developments in the global maritime security scenario in order to ensure that Danish efforts measure up and can be adapted to new developments concerning threats to maritime security.

The status of the strategy will be updated on an ongoing basis in consultation with relevant stakeholders. The government is therefore setting up a maritime safety contact group which will consist of representatives from the authorities, the maritime industry and knowledge institutions. The contact group will continuously monitor the implementation of the strategy and may propose adjustments to Denmark's efforts. In addition, other issues of maritime security can also be addressed in the contact group.

SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR MARITIME SECURITY

Due to the serious rise in maritime security challenges in areas such as the Gulf of Guinea, among others, the Danish government decided in 2021 to appoint a special representative for maritime security. The special representative has a basis in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, but supports the government's overall work to promote global maritime security in a broad sense. This work will be developed in close collaboration with the private maritime sector and international partners, such as the EU and the UN, among others.

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