



The EU's Response to Piracy in the Global Maritime Domain: Are the Lessons Learned in the Horn of Africa a Model for the Gulf of Guinea?

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Abstract

The European Union (EU) is seen as the leading actor in successfully fighting piracy around the Horn of Africa. As a global trade power with strong economic interests, the EU has become aware of the importance of a safe and secure maritime domain following the increase in attacks by Somali pirates from 2006 onwards. The EU Maritime Security Strategy adopted in 2014 provides evidence for this securitisation process.

The EU is also challenged by maritime security threats posed by pirates in the Gulf of Guinea. To date, there has been no comprehensive analysis to assess the potential transfer of successful EU instruments from the Horn of Africa to the piracy situation in West African waters. This thesis looks at both current and potential answers of the EU to fight piracy off West African coastlines. Based on qualitative research interviews, lessons learned from the EU's Comprehensive Approach to East Africa are identified and subsequently applied to the situation in the Gulf of Guinea.

The results show that the EU is rather reluctant to use crisis management instruments because it seeks to strengthen responsibility and ownership of the coastal countries. It rather provides financial support and expertise with the objective of establishing a maritime security architecture for the West African waters. Nonetheless, the EU can draw on its successful leadership in international political and military cooperation from around the Horn of Africa in order to make the use of available counter-piracy resources in the Gulf of Guinea more effective.