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## Operation Atalanta Welcomes New Deputy Commander Rear Admiral Gonzalez-Aller and Bids Farewell to Rear Admiral Wikström



On Friday 29 July 2016 Rear Admiral Jonas Wikström (Swedish Navy) handed over the role of Deputy Operation Commander (DCOM) of the European Union's counter-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia to Rear Admiral Cristobal Gonzalez-Aller (Spanish Navy).

The handover took place at the operational Headquarters (OHQ) in Northwood, London.

Rear Admiral Wikström joined the EU's counter-piracy operation in January this year and as part of the DCOM role he travelled to the Horn of Africa to meet the EU's counter-piracy partners. The strong cooperation and coordination that exists between the EU Naval Force, other naval forces, maritime industry and regional states have ensured that the pirate attacks that plagued vessels in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean just a few years ago remain suppressed.

Speaking about his time as DCOM, Rear Admiral Wikström stated, "It has been a privilege to serve with Operation Atalanta and to meet the sailors, marines and airmen who are working tirelessly on a daily basis to ensure that the humanitarian aid destined for the Somali people, as well as vessels carrying goods to and from Europe, arrive at their destination safely. I wish Rear Admiral Gonzalez-Aller and the rest of the Operation Atalanta team the very best of luck - stay steady!"

Rear Admiral Gonzalez-Aller, who will be in the DCOM post for six months said: "I want to thank Rear Admiral



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Wikström for his support and advice during the job handover. I am ready to build on his excellent contribution. We will continue to work hard to ensure that we keep the pressure on the pirates and to deny them the opportunity to attack ships.”

For more details about Rear Admiral Gonzalez-Aller click here: <http://eunavfor.eu/chain-of-command/>



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