

**Question for written answer E-010278/2014
to the Council**
Rule 130
Charles Tannock (ECR)

Subject: Piracy off the coast of West Africa

Following the Council's decision to extend the mandate of Operation Atalanta, currently under the command of Major General Martin Smith of the UK Marines, until 2016, there have been numerous reports of the deteriorating situation in the Gulf of Guinea.

The coast of West Africa now accounts for 19 % of all recorded incidents of piracy worldwide (according to conservative estimates), with the majority of incidents taking place in Nigerian waters. Analysts suggest that this is largely linked to Nigeria's internal political situation and associated dysfunctional oil industry.

Analysts suggest that piracy operations in West Africa are increasingly becoming entwined with the arms-smuggling networks that are linked to terrorist groups across the Sahel, as well as with drug-smuggling operations. As EU Member States fight the threat of ISIS in the Middle East and other, sometimes affiliated, terrorist groups across Africa, this is an extremely worrying trend.

1. What discussions has the Council had on this subject, and what, if any, action has been proposed?
2. What coordinated assistance are Member States providing to West African governments to fight piracy in the Gulf of Guinea?
3. Will the Council discuss the possibility of deploying a European naval force to the west coast of Africa?