Speech by CY PSC Ambassador Mr. Telemachou on Maritime Security and EU activities

EU – Washington Forum, 14 March 2013

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished guests,

- It is with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to address the EU-Washington Forum on the topic of maritime security and lessons from ongoing cooperation, primarily between the EU Member States themselves but also in terms of the transatlantic cooperation. Let me emphasise that for us, we understand maritime security to be more than just safe navigation and we understand the maritime related interests and challenges to be global and across the scope. So the transatlantic cooperation is vital if we are to succeed. We know of the importance the US attaches on maritime security in the South China sea, but on this, from our part, we remain modest, but none the less on most of the other issues transatlantic cooperation in maritime security is imperative.

- The importance of the maritime environment for the EU can be easily statistically demonstrated. According to the recent European Commission's Blue Growth communication, the EU's "blue economy" represents 5.4 million jobs and a gross added value of just below €500 billion per year. Strikingly, 75% of Europe's external trade and 37% of the trade within the EU is seaborne.

- Cyprus, as an island state and a maritime nation with a sizeable fleet (Europe's 3rd largest maritime actor) is naturally concerned with all facets of maritime security and aspires to contribute to the overall collective maritime security, notably, through:
  - Participation in the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), as well as the MARSUR network, the maritime surveillance program of EDA.
  - biannually hosting the Maritime Cyprus Conference, which is concerned with topical maritime security issues.
  - enactment of relevant legislation/procedures (I will later further elaborate on our recent enactment of counter-piracy legislation)
  - seeking good neighborly relations and an enhanced cooperation on maritime issues with our neighboring countries both at bilateral level and multilaterally (CY shares maritime borders with six (6) states),. To this end CY has signed agreements with regional partners (Greece, Israel, Lebanon and Egypt) concerning merchant shipping, trade, tourism etc.

- CY's concern and commitment to maritime security has been demonstrated during the CY Presidency of the Council of the EU when, the Republic of Cyprus hosted two specific seminars in Cyprus to produce specific results and then to be translated into EU polices; the first was concerned with the impact of Middle East developments on security and maritime security (Nicosia, July 2012), and the second with fostering regional ownership as regards the EU's comprehensive approach against piracy in the Horn of Africa (Larnaca, November 2012).

- Further, and with a view of promoting issues that concern both maritime security and development of military capabilities in this field, CY has jointly with France organised a high level Seminar on Maritime Security in the Mediterranean (Paris, September 2012), and another seminar in cooperation with the EDA focusing on European initiatives in the maritime environment, (Nicosia, October 2012).

- Alongside France we produced a position paper "On the EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS)" to help the High Representative and the External Action Service (EEAS) to prepare policies and elaborate work for a security strategy on the Maritime domain. But we have argued that this should be done in a comprehensive way.

- The EU is a complex legal monster as we all know it (different bodies and institutions have different competences). So what happened was that in 2003 we agreed our European Security Strategy (ESS) and in parallel but separately in 2007, we developed our Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP). But, those were done before the Lisbon Treaty so they were based on a different legal basis and remained separate. With our position paper one of the things we seek, is to address maritime domain issues (not just piracy which is already mentioned in the 2003 European Security Strategy) within the framework of security.

- Allow me to be a little bit more specific here and give you an example as to why we argue for the adoption of EUMSS. As the ESS was agreed in 2003 and thus before the Treaty of Lisbon, it does not cover the solidarity clause or the mutual assistance clause provided by the Lisbon Treaty. On the other hand, the IMP is not referred specifically on security. So with our position paper we want to see clarification of how the IMP (using its number of instruments) will contribute to the implementation of the European Security Strategy, in the future. We would like to see this materialized before the Defense Council meeting in Heads of State/Government Format in Dec. 2013.

- With our position paper, we suggest possible means that we should mobilize to implement our EUMSS. These are naval, air and land assets, of our Member States (of course always respecting of course their sovereign prerogatives) as the EU doesn't have its own means as such.

- Regarding the maritime military capability development aspect, current economic challenges, make it more pertinent than ever that the Union uses every available

- option at its disposal, such as through its policy of Pooling and Sharing, in order to mitigate its identified capability shortfalls, in the most cost-efficient manner.

- EDA (European Defence Agency) has been actively involved in improving capabilities in the maritime domain. It has launched a significant cooperative Research and Technology programme on maritime robotics, is initiating work on Maritime Mine Counter Measures, and works forward in enhancing maritime surveillance cooperation. These are just to name a few examples.

- A great maritime concern is still that of piracy. Piracy in the region of the Gulf of Aden and the Horn of Africa has become one of the gravest maritime security challenges of the 21st century. Indicatively, it is estimated that 18.000 ships cross the Gulf of Aden every year, whilst 50.000 heavy duty ships operate in the world. These ships are viewed as potential targets by pirates in certain coastal states, while controlling maritime highways is not an easy task. While statistics regarding the situation in the Horn point to a situation under control, with successful pirate operations becoming more and more scarce comparatively, we have recently witnessed the emergence of piracy in different parts of the world such as the Caribbean and the Straits of Malacca. Counter-piracy requires a decisive and preventive policy on behalf of the EU and on an international level.

- To this end, the EU is implementing a comprehensive approach to encounter the problem of piracy, combining surveillance, prevention, international legislation, coast-guard training and capability building and development support, whilst the deployment of naval forces has become a necessity. The EU's autonomous naval Operation, launched in Dec 2008 (Operation Atalanta) continues to play an important part in counter-piracy efforts.

- With our transatlantic partners, we share values and principles, common interests and we phase common threats – we see here transatlantic cooperation of a particular value added and we need to further explore that.

- Allow me at this point to also welcome EU internal developments as regards the progress achieved so far on determining the arrangements for the implementation by the Union of the Solidarity Clause (article 222 of the treaty on the functioning of the EU), according to which the Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster. Critically Cyprus anticipates that the final arrangements for the implementation of the Solidarity Clause will be applied in the case of attacks or disasters at sea, both in the territorial seas of member states and in international waters when affecting EU flagged ships.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Let me turn my attention on Maritime security for the Mediterranean. Rightly, the ESS regards the Mediterranean as a strategic priority of the EU. The maritime security of the Mediterranean is closely associated to the overall stability and security of the region. The European Commission's report "Towards an EU Integrated Maritime Policy and better maritime governance in the Mediterranean: questions and answers" (dated 09/11/2009), highlights both the importance of the Mediterranean as a strategic waterway but also the challenges the EU faces in the area (immigration, trafficking, and pollution). The security implications of the "Arab Spring" add to the challenges mentioned in the said report.
- The strategic priority the Cyprus Presidency placed on the EU Integrated Maritime Policy (EU-IMP), produced the "Limassol Declaration", signed on 8 October 2012, which served to re-energise the Integrated Maritime Policy, which will itself serve as a milestone in the further development of the EU's Maritime Policy. The IMP itself is based on the acknowledgment that all matters relating to Europe's oceans and seas are interlinked, and that maritime policies must therefore be developed in a comprehensive way if we are to reap the desired benefits. But furthermore in our position paper we argue that we should optimize maritime security related civilian as well military efforts within IMP and CFSP.
- Returning to statistics once more, the importance of maritime activity to EU's economy cannot be disputed, as the EU's maritime regions account for about 40% of its GDP and population. In ensuring the sustainability of this fact, the environmental pillar as well as issues of maritime security policy ought to be considered in tandem. In this regard, the EU IMP is an important tool in maximizing the sustainable development, economic growth and social cohesion of MS's, as well as in meeting the objectives of Europe 2020 Strategy.
- It is of strategic, political and operational significance to implement an EU Maritime Security Strategy. In order to consolidate the European Defence in the maritime domain, we need to approach the issue realistically, ensuring the overall coherence and efficiency of our tools. Through the Strategy, we should be able to identify challenges, risks and threats that might affect the EU's safety and security in the global maritime environment.
- Allow me to end this speech by referring to Cyprus by returning to the issue of maritime security in the Mediterranean.
- In aspiring to "lead by example", Cyprus adheres to ensuring that all activities and cooperation with neighboring states on maritime and energy are in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). In cases where neighboring countries have not ratified this Convention, the cooperation

between Cyprus and these states should to the extent possible, be guided by the principles of the Convention, which form part of customary international law.

- Cooperation with neighbor states is also vital on matters such as Search and Rescue, crisis response, the exploitation of common hydrocarbon resources, as well as cooperation on transportation and storage of such resources.

- Such efforts serve not to merely fulfill financial purposes, but importantly contribute to the overall maritime and energy security of the EU, through ensuring that international law is enforced, meanwhile strengthening our relations with our immediate southern neighbors.

Thank you very much for your attention.