



Strasbourg, 18 May 2012

Dear Mr Froh,

Thank you for your letter dated 23 April 2012. I am pleased to note that NATO and its Allies continue to review all records in order to ascertain what happened during the boat's journey and I look forward to receiving a detailed report of this inquiry as soon as possible. Furthermore I look forward to receiving information on any steps taken by NATO and its Allies to ensure that similar incidents do not occur in the future.

In the light of information contained in your letter and information that has come to light in the context of the release of my report, I have a number of technical questions which will allow me to progress further in my work. I would be grateful if you could provide answers to these questions.

1) Am I right in assuming that all military vessels are equipped to receive distress messages sent via Inmarsat (via the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)) and Hydrolant systems? It is my understanding that the Inmarsat system is part of the obligations enshrined in the SAR Convention.

2) With respect to the distress call sent by Rome MRCC to NATO operational headquarters on 27 March 2011 (a copy of which was provided in my first letter and attached also to this letter), Ambassador Evans' letter dated 27 March 2012 states that "it was forwarded to NATO Task Force units under its operational control". Could you please indicate at what time and at what date and to what vessels this was sent?

3) In addition to the 27 March distress call, could you please clarify the timeline of any other messages received from Rome MRCC on the boat in question, and the action taken by NATO (Headquarters Naples, or NATO vessels) on these messages in terms of when they were sent on, by whom and to whom?

The answers to these questions are important to understand and learn lessons from potential problems in lines of communication. It is obviously important also to deal with the Spanish Ministry of Defence's claims, in a letter addressed to me, that the Mendez-Nunez never received any message from NATO concerning the boat in question. This said, I received contradicting information from the Spanish Delegation during the debate on my report in the Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg, that a message was forwarded to the Mendez-Nunez following an 18 hours delay, by which time it was alleged that the location was too out of date to be of use in rescuing the boat in distress.

If such a delay indeed occurred in passing on the information, I would need an explanation from NATO as to the reasons for this delay.

Mr Richard FROH
Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Operations
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4) While I take note, however surprising, from your letter that no satellite imagery is available for the time and area of concern, I would like to ask you again to provide me with a set of relevant Recognised Maritime Pictures (RMP) for the following day and area (in a 40 nautical miles radius):

- 27/03/2011 around Lat: 33.97 Long: 12.93

As well as for the following areas

- 13°26'7.629"E 33°26'42.403"N

- 13°30'55.127"E 33°24'59.576"N

- 13°32'17.269"E 33°27'3.822"N

on each of the following 4 days:

- 3 April 2011

- 4 April 2011

- 5 April 2011

- 6 April 2011

I am sure you have access to my report and the Resolution adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly in April, but for the sake of certainty I am attaching the relevant links to these reports as follows:

For the report:

<http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewPDF.asp?FileID=18095&Language=EN>,

For the Parliamentary Assembly Resolution:

<http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewPDF.asp?FileID=18234&Language=EN>

I would like to thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter, and I look forward to continuing our good working relations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tineke Strik', written over a horizontal line.

Tineke STRIK
Rapporteur

Cc.

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Mr Hugo L.J. AMMERLAAN – Email: hlj.ammerlaan@hq.nato.int

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