**EFCA participated to the European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF) plenary conference in Venice**

20/11/2019

More than 90 delegates from the European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF) gathered in Venice for the plenary sessions of the Heads of Coast Guard Functions Organisations.

The three EU Agencies involved in the European Union Coast Guard cooperation were represented by their respective executive directors: Mr. Fabrice Leggeri (European Border and Coast Guard Agency), Ms. Maja Markovčić Kostelac for EMSA (European Maritime Safety Agency) and Mr. Pascal Savouret for the EFCA (European Fisheries Control Agency). The Italian Chairmanship, held jointly by the Italian Coast Guard and the Guardia di Finanza, had among the main objectives to enhance risk assessment, technological development and education and training, promoting the development of different specific Coast Guard Functions.

EFCA highlighted the project of the handbook on Coast Guard cooperation and thanked the Italian authorities for the outstanding achievements under their Chairmanship and on the COASTEX 19 exercise, which tested the concept of “Multipurpose Maritime Operations" (MMO) on 4 June 2019 through a drill at sea.

Under the operational coordination of the Italian Coast Guard and with the participation of several Member States and the three EU agencies means and personnel, eleven naval assets, three aircrafts and three boarding teams executed a complex exercise with a scenario that simulated activities to combat illegal fishing, fight oil pollution, conduct search and rescue operations and address illegal trafficking.

This annual event also involved international actors such as the Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) and the Turkish Coast Guard (Sahin), as well as organisations such as Interpol. The Plenary Conference was held in Venice with a view to enhance cooperation collaboration, cooperation and coordination between the acceding countries and the reference agencies and concluded with the formal hand-over of the Forum Chairmanship to France.

The ECGFF is a self-governing, non-binding, voluntary, independent and non-political forum bringing together the Coast Guard authorities from 25 EU Member States and Schengen associated countries, as well as representatives of the European Union institutions and bodies with competencies related to EU Coast Guard Functions.