



VLCC ANTIGONE RESCUES 8 SYRIAN REFUGEES

Rescue operations at sea are dangerous and require immediate action to safeguard the lives of the people on board the distressed vessel.

Late in the evening on May 27, 2022, Mr. Samaris Konstantinos from Britannia forwarded an email that the club's emergency line received from the NGO 'Watch the Med' in regard to a rescue request nearby the location that our VLCC Antigone was sailing. 8 Syrian refugees (7 men and 1 female) were sailing a small craft and were without water, food, and fuel for their engine. The email from the NGO was originally received by Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) Malta, RCC Rome and the authorities in Malta and Italy.

The email was then circulated to Euronav's Operations Manager and the Designated Person Ashore (DPA) and it was agreed to get in touch with our vessel Antigone. The DPA called the vessel and a Search and Rescue (SAR)-operation was initiated based on SOLAS Ch.V regulations 33. This regulation stipulates amongst others that when a vessel is in a position to be able to provide assistance to a vessel or person in distress at sea, it is bound to proceed with all speed to their assistance, informing them or the search and rescue service that the ship is doing so. This obligation applies regardless of the nationality or status of such persons or the circumstances in which they are found.

In less than one hour after initiating the rescue, the small craft was spotted by Antigone and the distressed refugees were successfully saved. The Antigone then proceeded with trying to disembark the refugees to a safe haven. On its way to Gibraltar (the vessel's original destination) the Antigone continuously contacted various harbours multiple times with the request to disembark the refugees.

Eventually, the Spanish authorities confirmed that the rescued persons could disembark in Algeciras, although the rescue operation did not fall under their maritime jurisdiction. On June 3rd, the refugees could finally disembark.

Our gratitude and respect go out the crew of the Antigone and the Spanish authorities for their efforts and attitude in salvaging the Syrian refugees.

VHF: Marine VHF Radio - Uses FM channels in the very high frequency (VHF) radio band in the frequency range between 156 and 174 MHz, inclusive, designated by the International Telecommunication Union as the VHF maritime mobile band.