

Kenya Maritime Authority set to boost maritime safety and security

By Michelle Wanga



Kenya Maritime Authority (KMA) officially received five state of the art Search and Rescue (SAR) Boats from the European Union (EU) on Wednesday, 2nd October, 2024 during a handover ceremony in Mombasa. The vessels are part of the EU-funded Go Blue Project and were provided through Expertise France to enhance Kenya's capacity to respond to emergencies at sea.

The Search and Rescue boats which consist of two large and three smaller vessels are equipped with cutting-edge navigation and technology to operate efficiently both near the shore and in deeper waters. The vessels will be stationed along key points of Kenya's coastline, ready to respond to emergencies with speed and precision.

The event was graced by the European Union Ambassador to Kenya, H. E Henriette Geiger, Expertise France Project Manager for Go Blue, G  lle Pasquier, and representative, J  r  me Michelet, the Governor, Lamu County, H.E, Issa Timamy, the Principal Secretary- State Department of Shipping and Maritime, Geoffrey Kaituko, the Kenya Maritime Authority Chairman Hamisi Mwanguya and Ag. Director General, Julius Koech, Mombasa County Commissioner Mohammed Nur Hassan and the Kenya Coast Guard Service Director General, Bruno Shioso.

“The European Union is proud to partner with Kenya in supporting its maritime safety and security. By investing in modern equipment and capacity building for key personnel, we are ensuring that more lives can be saved in emergencies at sea,” said H. E Henriette Geiger, the European Ambassador to Kenya.

H. E Henriette Geiger also noted that the European Union has committed 600 billion Kenya Shillings to strengthen integration and effective maritime law enforcement and improvement of cooperation and interoperability between maritime agencies.

Mr. Geoffrey Kaituko, the Principal Secretary, State Department of shipping assured attendees that maritime agencies will work together to increase the number of Search and Rescue on Kenyan waters.

“The delivery of the SAR boats is a game changer for Kenya’s maritime safety. With these resources, we are better equipped to respond quickly and save lives. Our trained personnel will utilize these boats to their full potential, ensuring swift and coordinated responses to any distress at sea, said Eng. Julius Koech, Ag. Director, General, Kenya Maritime Authority.

The unique handover ceremony that included a launch and test-sail of the donated Search and Rescue boats at sea by KMA officers marks a milestone in the ongoing collaborative efforts between various Kenyan maritime agencies which include Kenya Maritime Authority, Kenya Coast Guard Service, the Kenya Red Cross and various County Rescue Teams. In the past weeks before the ceremony, the agencies underwent intensive practical training to operate the boats, enhance their search and rescue skills and prepare them to operate in both coastal and deep-sea conditions.

“This initiative is more than just handing over boats; it is about empowering Kenya’s maritime sector. These new boats, combined with the expertise of the agencies we have trained, ensure that the vessels will be operated with maximum efficiency, creating a safer coastline for all,” said G  lle Pasquier, Project Manager for Go Blue, Expertise France.

The training and handover of the Search and Rescue boats represent a long-term investment in the safety of Kenya’s coastal waters. With the new boats and enhanced skills, Kenyan Search and Rescue teams are now better prepared to respond promptly and efficiently to maritime emergencies, ensuring the safety of local communities and international maritime traffic.

