

PRESS RELEASE

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Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems enter into operation in Portugal for border surveillance

The first flight of the operation took place on 25 September and marks the beginning of a two-month cycle targeting real-time pre-border monitoring and law enforcement. EMSA contracted Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems are being used this time by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) to provide support to the Portuguese Guarda Nacional Republicana (GNR) (Portuguese National Republican Guard), Air Force and Navy, as well as to the Eurosur National Coordination Centre.

While the operation will be remotely coordinated from the Frontex Situational Centre in Poland by both Frontex experts and Portuguese authorities, the remote pilot and payload operator will be directing the RPAS from a ground control station in Portugal supervised by the Air Force.

The particular RPAS in use is a twin-engine, fixed wing AR 5 – Evo and has been contracted by EMSA from the REACT consortium (Tekever/Collecte Localisation Service). The RPAS is capable of flying both day and night, has a take-off weight of approximately 150kg, and is equipped with electro-optical and infra-red cameras, maritime radar and still camera providing greater detail on objects of interest.

The RPAS offers the possibility of detecting ship movements thanks to an Automatic Identification System (AIS) receiver on board as well as to support emergency situations by way of a distress signal receiver. The use of satellite communications enables the RPAS to fly and operate far from the coast where radio line of sight operations would not usually reach.



“By combining our efforts and working jointly with Frontex and the Portuguese authorities, we are able to support coast guard activities in a very concrete and pragmatic way,” explained EMSA Executive Director, Markku Mylly.”

EMSA’s RPAS services have been developed to assist in maritime surveillance operations to support national authorities involved in coast guard functions, including: maritime pollution and emissions monitoring; detection of illegal fishing, anti-drug trafficking, and illegal immigration; border surveillance; and, search and rescue operations.

For more information and further queries, please contact: information@emsa.europa.eu