



# PRESS RELEASE

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## Regional operation sees EMSA RPAS flying over the East Baltic Sea region in support of multiple national authorities in Finland, Estonia and Latvia

Since the beginning of May EMSA RPAS have been flying over the East Baltic Sea region following a coordinated request for enhanced maritime surveillance from the Finnish Border Guard, the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board and the Latvian Coast Guard Service. The regional scope of the operation enables cross-border flights over the Gulf of Finland and the exclusive economic zones of both Estonia and Latvia. While the service increases situational awareness for a wide range of coast guard functions, the focus of the operation is on maritime safety and security, environmental protection, fisheries control and search and rescue.

During this five-month operation, the national authorities from Finland, Estonia and Latvia are working in close cooperation, planning, following and receiving data from the flights irrespective of the point from which the RPAS is deployed. As the flights will continue throughout the summer, when maritime activities typically increase, the operation is expected to bring additional support to the emergency services as they monitor and respond to incidents in the coastal waters.

EMSA is providing this service through its contractor Nordic Unmanned, deploying a Textron Aerosonde which uses a catapult for take-off and a recovery net for landing. The Textron Aerosonde unmanned fixed-wing aircraft can stay in the air for 10 hours and can fly up to 140 km within radio range and further depending on the ground relay stations. The aircraft is equipped with a gimbal with optical and infrared sensors, AIS receiver and IMSAR radar.

This operation builds on the services provided by EMSA in 2021 to both [Estonia](#) and [Finland](#), taking forward the regional dimension by enabling cross-border flights within the airspace of the three participating countries.



European Maritime Safety Agency

## **ABOUT EMSA**

The European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) is a decentralised agency of the EU, based in Lisbon, Portugal. EMSA serves the EU's maritime interests for a safe, secure, green and competitive maritime sector, delivering value for member states through support for [pollution prevention and response](#), [maritime surveillance](#), [safety and security](#), [digitalisation and the provision of integrated maritime services](#), and [technical assistance](#).

Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) services are offered free of charge to all EU countries by EMSA. They have been developed to assist in maritime surveillance operations and ship emission monitoring and can operate in all seas surrounding the European Union. RPAS services can provide support to traditional coast guard functions, including search and rescue and pollution prevention and response. The services are offered to member countries individually and as part of EMSA's regional RPAS strategy, which allows multiple coast guard functions in several EU countries to be supported by one or more RPAS services. [See where EMSA is flying](#).

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