

EN
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Answer given by Ms Bulc
on behalf of the European Commission
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As part of Union cooperation on coast guard functions, the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA) have established common maritime information and surveillance services including the use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS). This provides additional multipurpose maritime surveillance capacity to national authorities for example in monitoring of safety of navigation, detection of vessels in distress, marine pollution, measurement of ship emissions, identification and tracking of vessels involved in illegal activities at sea, etc.

EMSA, in agreement with EFCA and EBCGA took the lead in RPAS services and currently has eight contracts in place for different RPAS with varying capabilities, including a contract with the Portuguese firm CEiiA. The Israeli company ELBIT is a subcontractor of CEiiA, providing the Hermes 900 RPAS. EMSA does not purchase any RPAS, but concludes contracts with the operating companies.

In 2018 and 2019, EMSA has provided RPAS services for an average of three months each to Portugal, Spain, Denmark, Greece, Croatia, Italy and Iceland with different types of RPAS and operational goals. Additionally, EMSA has supported the EBCGA in 2018 and 2019 with surveillance along the Portuguese coast.

EMSA, in close cooperation with EFCA and EBCGA, has invited Member States to indicate their interest in new operations for 2020-2021. As regards safety of operations, EMSA cooperates with the European Aviation Safety Authority.