



Image credit: EMSA

PRESS RELEASE

27 June 2021

EMSA's remotely piloted helicopter flying from on board Icelandic Coast Guard patrol vessels

The Icelandic Coast Guard is using EMSA's remotely piloted aircraft services from on board their patrol vessels to enhance maritime situational awareness for an array of different operational tasks. The services have been deployed from on board the ICGV Thor vessel since 30 May and will be deployed from on board the ICGV Freyja vessel from July.

The Icelandic Coast Guard has the challenging task of monitoring a substantially large exclusive economic zone. While the satellite imagery provided through EMSA's [CleanSeaNet](#) and [Copernicus Maritime Surveillance](#) services offers a near real time picture over vast swathes of sea areas, the RPAS offer the possibility of taking a closer look at identified areas of interest particularly around the area of the patrol vessel thereby extending its situational awareness in real time. The service is intended to support Icelandic Coast Guard activities in a wide range of function areas including fisheries inspection and control, maritime safety, maritime ship and port security, law enforcement related to trafficking and smuggling, maritime border control, maritime environmental protection and response, and maritime search and rescue.

The aircraft being used is a CAMCOPTER® S100, under contract to EMSA from Schiebel Aircraft GmbH. It has several features making it suitable for this service including flight endurance of over six hours and a range of up to 200km. A dedicated platform has been installed to allow the aircraft to safely take off and land from the vessel. Information is gathered from optical and infrared cameras on board the RPAS as well as from an AIS receiver and an automated maritime surface search sensor to detect targets at sea. RPAS acquired information can then be directly used from onboard the vessel and shared live with Coast Guard authorities ashore through EMSA's RPAS Data Centre. This sharing is made possible through a satellite communications service also installed on board the vessel by EMSA with the support of its contractor SES TechCOM S.A.

ABOUT RPAS

Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) services are offered free to all EU member states 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 states individually and as part of EMSA's regional RPAS strategy, which allows multiple coast guard functions in several EU member states to be supported by one or more RPAS services. See [where EMSA is flying](#).

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](#).

Any requests for further information can be sent to: information@emsa.europa.eu