



PRESS RELEASE

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EMSA sniffer drone supports French authorities to monitor ship emissions on Mediterranean Sea coast

EMSA has responded to a request from the French authorities to provide surveillance support for multiple tasks including the monitoring of emissions from passenger and commercial ships using the busy ports in the area of Marseille (Port of Marseille, Port of Fos). The sniffer drone deployed takes measurements from the exhaust plumes of passing ships to help verify compliance with EU and IMO rules capping the sulphur content of marine fuels (Directive (EU) 2016/802 and MARPOL Annex VI), with a view to reducing harmful effects on human health and the environment. The operation follows recent successful trials and is expected to run until 23 December 2022.

The ship safety inspectors of the Interregional Directorate for the Mediterranean Sea (DIRM MED) in charge of dockside controls will be directly involved in the targeting of vessels in close contact with the pilots of the drone. Each flight will be followed in real time through EMSA's RPAS Data Centre and the measurements taken will trigger follow-up inspections via the THETIS-EU database for port state control where instances of non-compliance are suspected.

The particular model of RPAS in use is ideal for rapid mobilisation from different sites. The ATLAS 4 vertical take-off and landing quadcopter manufactured by ALTUS LSA and supplied by the ALTUS LSA-led consortium with ADAPTIT is under contract to EMSA and fully equipped with different payloads including cameras and emissions measurement sensors.



European Maritime Safety Agency

While emissions monitoring will be the primary task of the operation, the RPAS may also be deployed for other complementary tasks within a designated area. In this way, it can also serve the purposes of search and rescue, fisheries control, and marine pollution monitoring depending on the specific needs of the authorities at any given time.

ABOUT RPAS

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 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.](#)

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](#).

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