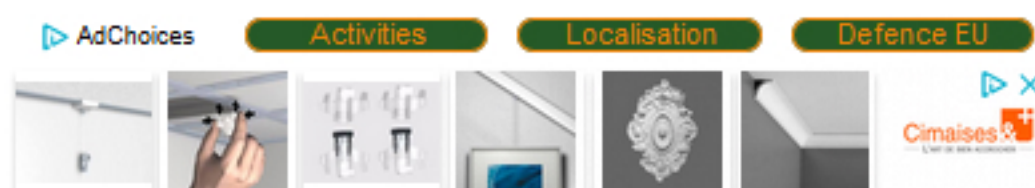


ECA Group to take part in EU-funded OCEAN2020 project

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ECA Group is part of a winning consortium OCEAN2020, a project related to the first European Defence Found's initiative to boost Europe's defence capabilities, issued by the European Union under the 'Preparatory Action on Defence Research' programme. The competitive selection was conducted by the European Defence Agency.



ECA Group takes part in this project with its suite of cutting-edge robotic systems dedicated to maritime homeland security and defence solutions.

Within the Leonardo-led OCEAN2020 team, ECA Group will collaborate with partners from 15 European countries. These include the Ministries of Defence of: Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Lithuania, with additional support from the Ministries of Defence of Sweden, France, the United Kingdom, Estonia and the Netherlands.

OCEAN2020 is the first example of a cross-European military research programme to-date. The bid required a thorough analysis of operational requirements and a technologically-innovative yet operationally-realistic proposal. The research project also will see the integration of unmanned platforms in surveillance and interdiction missions.

OCEAN2020 will see unmanned platforms of different type (UAVs with fixed wings or rotary wings, surface - UAVs and underwater-UUVs robotics) integrated within naval units' command and control centres, allowing for data exchange via satellite, with command and control centres on land. The joint and cooperative use of both manned and unmanned vehicles will also be demonstrated as part of the project.

In addition to complex simulation work, OCEAN2020 project will involve two live demonstrations (in the Mediterranean and Baltic Seas) of maritime surveillance and interdiction operations, conducted by European fleets using unmanned aircraft, surface vessels and underwater systems. The data collected by various systems during these two demos will be processed and sent to a prototype European command and control centre in Brussels.

ECA Group will be a prominent actor during the first demo, coordinated by the Italian Navy, scheduled to take place in the Mediterranean Sea in 2019. With the planned support of the French Navy, along with unmanned platforms from partners SAFRAN (France), IDE (Greece), and CMRE (NATO), ECA Group will deploy its Inspector MKII USV and one of its A-serie AUVs (A9, A18, A27) to conduct maritime interdiction operations against suspicious vessels involved in illegal weapons trafficking and smuggling activities. Part of the missions deals with the localisation and the identification of sunken illegal goods/weapons on the seabed. This is achieved efficiently through the collaborative teamwork of the USVs/AUVs whose mission can be configured, planned for, executed and supervised using ECA Group Mission Management Platform UMIS. Recovery of the sunken, localised/identified, crates could then be performed, whenever decided, by a remotely operated ROV (ECA Group range of ROVs).

Through its participation to OCEAN2020 and its collaboration with key industrial partners, ECA Group's ambition is to bring its contribution to the construction of European Defence as a global provider of top-notch operational maritime robotic solutions based on collaborating unmanned vehicles, covering a wide range of markets and applications from underwater, surface, or the air.