

## PRESS RELEASE

23 July 2020

### EMSA's RPAS surveillance flights in support of EFCA's fisheries control resumed

The Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) services provided by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) have been successfully resumed on board the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) chartered fisheries Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) Lundy Sentinel. These services were interrupted in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 crisis and related restrictions, even though Lundy Sentinel continued operating under COVID-19 protocols after having established safeguard measures.



Lundy Sentinel left the port of Vigo on 27 June 2020 to patrol the international waters of western and central Mediterranean Sea in the framework of the Union commitment towards regional fisheries management organisations as the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). This mission focused on the monitoring of Bluefin tuna and other regulated species fishing activities as well as surveillance of Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRA).



*Image credits: EFCA/EMSA/Nordic Unmanned/SES*

The RPAS on board is a lightweight Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) quadcopter drone operated by the service provider Nordic Unmanned under a contract with EMSA. Payload consists of an optical and infrared camera.

The RPAS provides additional information in the immediate vicinity of the ship as for instance needed prior and during a boarding. EMSA also organises a real time flight data and video stream via the secure EMSA SATCOM system to the EFCA Coordination Centre (CC).

The coordinated action between the two agencies started in 2019 and flights have been monitoring areas of interest in the Mediterranean Sea, Western Waters of the North-East Atlantic Ocean, North Sea and Baltic Sea.

This RPAS service takes place within the context of the European cooperation on coast guard functions, currently chaired by EFCA, in which the EU agencies EFCA, EMSA and Frontex provide support to member states' national competent authorities ensuring cost effective and coordinated action at sea.

See the RPAS section on the [EMSA website](#) and the section on European Cooperation on Coast Guard functions at the [EFCA website](#).

For more info or contact us at: [information@emsa.europa.eu](mailto:information@emsa.europa.eu) or [EFCACOMMUNICATIONS@efca.europa.eu](mailto:EFCACOMMUNICATIONS@efca.europa.eu)