
ECA Group wins a contract worth more than 20 million euros for the modernisation of mine countermeasures vessels to be equipped with its UMIS unmanned system

Following an international contest, ECA Group has been awarded a contract worth more than 20 million euros for the modernization of three mine countermeasures vessels belonging to the Latvian navy and equipped with conventional mine countermeasures vessels acquired from the Royal Netherlands navy in 2006. These vessels require a modernisation of their mine hunting system. These vessels will be delivered with a Mine Warfare Data Center successively in 2021, 2023 and 2024.

This new success follows the contract won in 2019 in consortium with Naval Group, Belgium Naval & Robotics, for the supply of the unmanned system (Toobox) UMIS™ (Unmanned Mine Countermeasures Integrated System) to the Belgian and Dutch navies for an amount of approximately 450 million euros; the first contract in the world for new ships equipped with a Toobox, representing a technological leap in the field of underwater mine clearance.

Under this contract, ECA Group will provide the Latvian navy with an innovative solution for the modernisation of its existing mine countermeasures vessels, replacing the conventional detection system based on a hull sonar for mines with a smaller unmanned system consisting of the underwater drones AUV A18-M for detection and underwater robots Seascan MK2 and K-STER C for identification and clearance of the mines. ECA Group will modify the vessels with the support of its subsidiary Mauric, specialized in naval architecture, and Latvian partners, in order to install these modern mine countermeasures systems. At the end of the contract, the Latvian Navy will thus be able to carry out underwater mine clearance operations without the ship entering the minefield (Stand-Off concept). This contract, like all mine warfare contracts, will entail maintenance and sales of consumable over a period of 10 to 20 years.

The Latvian navy will acquire a compact version of the UMIS™ system. As ECA Group's UMIS™ system is scalable, in the future, the marine will be able to supplement its unmanned system progressively, depending on its needs, while maintaining the compatibility with the existing, modernised equipment and new, integrated drones.

While many navies will be buying new mine countermeasures vessels equipped with a Toolbox in the coming years, many of them have mine countermeasures vessels with a lifespan that can be increased or will acquire pre-owned ones. The latter might be interested in modernisation solutions allowing them to benefit from the high-performance level of the latest drones and to switch to the Stand-Off mine countermeasures operations enhancing the security for the crews and the ship.

With this contract, ECA Group is growing on a new market: renovation of mid-life mine countermeasures systems on ships. In the case of Latvia, it concerns the Alkmaar tripartite mine countermeasures vessel acquired from the Royal Netherlands navy. The solution chosen by Latvia allows to add renewed potential to these vessels.

Once they have received their new mine countermeasures vessels, it is possible that the Belgian, Royal Netherlands and French navies, currently using tripartite mine countermeasures vessels, sell their old vessels to different interested navies. ECA Group can then propose to modernise these

pre-owned vessels and equip them with the modern and effective UMIS™ mine countermeasure system.

The UMIS™ Toolbox can also be installed on other models of conventional mine countermeasures vessels or on ships that are not used for mine countermeasures. ECA Group will offer this modernisation solution to all navies that intend to keep and optimise their conventional mine countermeasure vessels or consider the acquisition of pre-owned vessels.

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Enabling major industry players to find new routes to successful innovation and production processes by providing 3D printers, premium material, software and 3D printed parts.

The Group reported revenue of €274,6 M in 2019. It is backed by close to 1,800 employees and operations in 7 countries.

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