

2019					
Baltic Sea	45	22	5	49%	23%
North sea	41	8	2	19%	25%
Western Waters	62	33	13	53%	39%
Mediterranean	160	184	116	115%	63%
TOTAL	308	247	136	80%	55%
Overall Total	609	435	202	71%	46%

Regarding the experience of using the Remote Piloted Aircraft System on board the OPV, Table 2 provides information about the number of flights performed, the indicated dates and the geographical area covered.

It should be noted that this has been the first experience in the deployment of a light quadcopter (weight of 2300g, battery powered) from on board the OPV. The endurance of the RPAS is limited to around 35 minutes and the working range is 2,5 Nm (4,5 km) from the target. The RPAS sensors has proven to be able to provide good image and video footage quality.

Table 2 – Number of RPAS flights by patrol dates and geographical area.

Dates	Geographical Area	Number of RPAS flights
1 – 14 Sep 19	Central Med	5 surveillance flights 9 test/training flights Totals 14 flights
16 – 29 Sep 19	Central Med / Adriatic Sea	9 surveillance flights 1 test/training flight Totals 10 flights
01 – 13 Oct 19	Central Med / Adriatic Sea	13 surveillance flights 6 test/training flights Totals 19 flights
15 – 29 Oct 19	Western Med North Atlantic	9 surveillance flights 1 test/training flight Totals 10 flights
31 Oct – 20 Nov 19	North Atlantic Gulf of Biscay North Sea	4 surveillance flights 1 test/training flight Totals 5 flights
22 Nov – 04 Dec 19	Baltic Sea	8 surveillance flights 1 test/training flight Totals 9 flights

The use of the RPAS aims at improving the safety and the security of the boarding team and has been recognised as an added value.

The core task of the RPAS is to support pre-boarding phase, through enabling checks of the security and safety conditions for the inspection team before the actual boarding, during boarding and when leaving the inspected vessel. Other tasks are related to fisheries control e.g. observing behaviour on-board that might suggest potential infringements such as: discarding, use of illegal gear and identification of fishing activity in prohibited areas or during closure season. Furthermore, the RPAS video is also reviewed by the boarding team and the master of the vessel in order to perform a post boarding assessment to facilitate the continued improvement of procedures.