



Advanced Maritime Defense: Leonardo DRS Introduces MMEP Anti-UAS System

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April 20, 2026 marks a new advancement in the protection of maritime operations: **Leonardo DRS** has announced the introduction of an **advanced Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (anti-UAS) capability** specifically designed for the naval environment. The system, named **Maritime Mission Equipment Package (M-MEP)**, has been successfully integrated on an **autonomous unmanned surface vehicle (AUSV)**, opening new prospects in **defense against unmanned aerial threats**.

In recent years, the use of drones—from simple commercial quadcopters to long-range aircraft—has transformed the threat landscape. In the maritime domain, these systems pose an increasing risk to **military ships, port infrastructures, and strategic communication lines**. In this context, the ability to **quickly detect and neutralize** these assets has become an operational priority.

The **M-MEP** system was created precisely to meet this need. Designed for **rapid integration** on both manned platforms and autonomous systems, it offers a “**plug-and-play**” solution that reduces the time between identifying the operational need and its implementation in the field. This approach prioritizes **flexibility, modularity, and deployment speed**.

Integrated Technology and Informational Superiority

The core of the **M-MEP** system lies in its **integrated architecture**, which combines **advanced sensors, command and control, and neutralization tools** into a single operational solution. Key components include **maritime radars** and **electro-optical/infrared (EO-IR) sensors**, capable of ensuring accurate detection even in complex environmental conditions.

A distinctive element is the **SAGEcore™** software platform, developed for **sensor data fusion** through algorithms based on **artificial intelligence**. This capability enhances **Maritime Domain Awareness**, allowing operators to **identify and classify threats in reduced time**.

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SAGEcore™ software platform. Source leonardodrs.com.

As emphasized by **Cari Ossenfort**, Senior Vice President and General Manager of the Naval Electronics business unit, UAS threats are rapidly evolving in terms of **autonomy, range, and numbers**. In this scenario, it becomes essential to have a system capable of **integrating detection and operational response** in a coherent and effective manner.

The added value of the **M-MEP** is precisely this integration: sensors, communication network, and neutralization capabilities operate in synergy, contributing to **reducing the operators' workload** and increasing the overall effectiveness of defense. Moreover, the **scalability of the system** allows adaptation to different platforms, from large naval assets to smaller unmanned vehicles.

Operational Implications and Future Prospects

The integration of the **M-MEP** system on the autonomous vehicle **STORMRUNNER**, developed by **Sea Machines**, represents a concrete demonstration of the potential of this technology. The official presentation will take place during the **Navy League Sea-Air-Space Symposium**, one of the main international events in the sector.

From an operational standpoint, the introduction of **modular and interoperable anti-UAS capabilities** allows for multi-layered defense extension. Not only military ships, but also **ports, coastal infrastructures, and expeditionary forces** can benefit from more effective protection against unmanned aerial threats.

A particularly relevant aspect is the use on **unmanned platforms**. Surface autonomous vehicles (**USV**) equipped with systems like the M-MEP can operate in complex scenarios, performing **surveillance and defense** functions without directly exposing human personnel. This represents a significant evolution in the way maritime operations are planned and executed.

Looking to the future, it is evident that technological competition in the maritime domain will increasingly focus on the ability to **integrate autonomous systems, artificial intelligence, and multi-layer defense**. In this sense, the initiative of **Leonardo DRS** fits into a trend that sees armed forces focusing on **flexible, scalable, and rapidly deployable solutions**.

In a context characterized by increasingly dynamic threats, systems like the **M-MEP** represent a key element to ensure **security and operational continuity** in contemporary maritime theaters.

News link: <https://www.leonardodrs.com/news/press-releases/leonardo-drs-launches-new-maritime-counter-uas-capability-to-defeat-aerial-unmanned-threats-at-sea/>