



PRESS RELEASE

Launching of the *Tournai*, third mine countermeasure vessel of the Belgian-Dutch rMCM programme

The launching ceremony of the *Tournai*, third of the twelve mine countermeasure vessels in the Belgian-Dutch rMCM programme, intended for the Belgian Navy, took place on 2 July 2024 in Concarneau in the presence of the Belgian Minister of Defence, Ms Dedonder, and the Mayor of Tournai, Mr Delannois. The launching was carried out by Kership, the programme's industrial prime contractor, on behalf of Naval Group, the overall prime contractor.

The *Tournai*, third ship in the programme and second for the Belgian Navy, will be delivered to Belgium in 2026. The first ship in the series, the *Oostende*, destined for the Belgian Navy, was launched on 29 March 2023, and the second, the *Vlissingen*, destined for the Royal Netherlands Navy, on 19 October 2023. The fourth in the series, *Scheveningen*, the second vessel for the Dutch Navy, was laid down on 19 July 2023 and is scheduled to be launched in December 2024.

Delivery of the *Oostende* is scheduled for summer 2025 in Zeebrugge, Belgium. Deliveries of the other ships will then be staggered until mid-2030, at a rate of two a year.

A unique industrial and European partnership

The rMCM programme was awarded in 2019 to Belgium Naval & Robotics, the consortium formed by Naval Group and Exail, as part of an international competition. It provides for the supply to the Belgian Navy and the Royal Netherlands Navy of twelve mine countermeasures vessels, as well as around a hundred drones integrated into a toolbox to equip the vessels. In September 2023, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between France, Belgium and the Netherlands, allowing France to use the design of the rMCM ships to equip the French Navy with six ships. Thales will be in charge of the onboard UAV system for France.

This programme is a major component of European defence cooperation. It demonstrates the ability of European states to work together and share a solution destined to become the benchmark in mine countermeasures, not only for the Belgian, Dutch and French navies but also for other partner navies in Europe and around the world.

Naval Group, as overall architect and prime contractor, is responsible for the design of the ships, overall integration, testing and commissioning of the mission system (combat system and mine countermeasures system).

Kership, a joint venture between Naval Group and Piriou, is the industrial prime contractor for the twelve ships, which are being built in Concarneau and Lanester.

Exail, co-contractor, is in charge of the UAV mission system, most of which will be produced in Ostend, Belgium. Maintenance of the ships will be carried out in Belgium as part of a close collaboration between the Belgian Navy and Naval Group Belgium, with the assistance of its partner Flanders Ship Repair in Zeebrugge.

A resilient vessel and a state-of-the-art toolbox

These specialist mine warfare vessels will be the first to have the capacity to embark and launch or fly a combination of surface drones (vessels of around 12 metres and 18 tonnes), underwater drones and aerial drones. The mine countermeasures vessels will use a fully robotised system to detect, classify and neutralise mines. They can withstand underwater explosions and have very low acoustic, electrical and magnetic signatures, in line with the missions to be carried out.

These minehunters have the following characteristics:

- Length: 82.6m overall
- Width: 17m overall
- Displacement: 2800t
- Maximum speed: 15.3 knots
- Range: >3500 nautical miles
- Accommodation: 63 people
- UAV capabilities : UMISOFT Exail system, 2 surface drones (Inspector 125 Exail), 3 autonomous underwater vehicles (A-18 equipped with UMISAS 120 Exail sonar), 2 towed sonars (T-18 equipped with UMISAS 240 Exail sonar), 2 mine identification and destruction systems (Seascan and K-Ster C Exail), 2 aerial drones (V200 Saab Skeldar), 1 Exail influence dredger integrating 5 magnetic modules from CTM and 1 acoustic module from PATRIA.
- Boarding capacity: 2 RHIB SOLAS 7m boats.
- Handling: 2 side gantries with floating cradles for 18t surface drones and commando boats, 1 15t stern crane, 3t overhead crane.

FOLLOW US



Social media



BELGIUM NAVAL & ROBOTICS

BELGIUM NAVAL & ROBOTICS is the name of the Naval Group - Exail consortium formed to respond to the Belgian-Dutch tender for the replacement and initial support of the mine countermeasures capability.

BELGIUM NAVAL & ROBOTICS
38 – 40 Square de Meeûs, B-1000 Brussels
contact@belgium-naval-and-robotics.be

Contacts

Naval Group

Bénédicte Mano

Mob. +33 (0)6 76 46 17 77

benedicte.mano@naval-group.com

Exail

Gwenaëlle Allaire

Tel. +33 (0)1 30 08 88 88

gwenaelle.allaire@exail.com