

Press release

Thursday, 22 January 2026

Royal IHC and Demcon unmanned systems join forces for scalable autonomous maritime operations

Royal IHC and Demcon unmanned systems are entering into a strategic partnership to accelerate the deployment of unmanned and autonomous vessels in both the civil and defence sectors. The partnership has started with the development and integration of containerised Launch and Recovery Systems (LARS) for USVs and UUVs. This solution enables operators to deploy their autonomous and remote-controlled unmanned vessels more easily, efficiently and safely in existing operations and in a variety of conditions.

Both parties emphasise that the current containerised LARS solution is only the beginning of a broader collaboration. Royal IHC and Demcon unmanned systems share an ambitious vision for the future in which scalability, industrialisation and sustainable deployment of autonomous systems are central. Their common goal is to lower the threshold for large-scale, safe and future-proof deployment of USVs, UUVs and automation solutions.

Royal IHC contributes its expertise as a high-tech system integrator and shipbuilder for complex and automated work vessels. Demcon unmanned systems adds its innovative technologies and experience in the field of remote control and autonomous unmanned vessels. Together, they form a solid foundation for a clear vision of growth towards multiple smaller and larger autonomous vessels in the future.

“This Dutch collaboration is an important step towards the future for us, allowing us to make optimal use of each other's competencies. Starting with LARS solutions for our USV portfolio is a logical first step, as it enables us to deploy our vessels more efficiently and on a larger scale. This makes it possible to deploy unmanned vessels quickly and safely from workboats, pontoons and other equipment. This increases deployability and opens up new areas of application, which will further accelerate the adoption of these innovations and increase their added value” Fedor Ester, Managing Director and Co-founder of Demcon unmanned systems.

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Derk te Bokkel, CEO of Royal IHC, said: "This is a natural fit: our vision is shared, our technologies plug in seamlessly, and our markets amplify each other. Together we can move maritime autonomy from promising pilots to industrial scale."

As two Dutch pioneers, the partnership between Royal IHC and Demcon unmanned systems marks an important step in the continuous innovation and industrialisation of autonomous maritime operations.



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Note for the editors, not for publication:

About Royal IHC

Royal IHC is determined to play a leading role in making the maritime industry more efficient and sustainable.

Anchored in the rich Dutch maritime history, Royal IHC continues to expand its position as a leading supplier of maritime technology and craftsmanship. With the right expertise on board and driven by innovation, Royal IHC offers a clear competitive advantage to its global customers in the dredging, offshore, mining and defence industries.

With its equipment, vessels and services, Royal IHC provides reliable, integrated solutions to increase customers' operational efficiency and enable more sustainable solutions. In an ever-changing world, our goal remains to find the smartest and safest way forward for both our customers and Royal IHC employees.

For more information, please contact: press@royalihc.com

This press release can also be found on our website <https://www.royalihc.com/>

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About Demcon unmanned systems

Demcon unmanned systems is a Dutch maritime technology company specialising in high-quality autonomous unmanned surface vessels (USVs) for a wide range of maritime applications. The company offers a broad portfolio of proprietary USV platforms up to 24 metres, complemented by fully custom build projects and advanced control software packages for safe, efficient and scalable remote operations.

Driven by innovation, sustainability and a passion for robotics, Demcon is transforming maritime operations with practical autonomous solutions that contribute to a more sustainable future. The company develops end-to-end USV solutions entirely in-house: from modular USV platforms to full-stack software, including autonomous navigation, operating system and mission management applications.

By developing both hardware and software core systems in-house Demcon unmanned systems retains control over quality, technology and scalability. The company therefore manages the entire process from concept development and production to delivery and lifecycle support, including maintenance and technological upgrade services. Demcon thus supplies turnkey and fully integrated USV solutions to customers in sectors including hydrography, offshore energy, defence, infrastructure and inland water management.

Demcon unmanned systems is part of the Demcon group.

For more information, please contact: unmanned@demcon.com

This press release can also be found at www.demcon-unmanned.nl