

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Launch of the Mine Counter Measures Laboratory (MCM Lab) in Brussels, a network of Belgian partners federated around Naval Group Belgium for R&D collaborations**

**On 25 November 2021, Naval Group announced the creation of the MCM (Mine CounterMeasures) R&D centre of excellence within its subsidiary, Naval Group Belgium. It is the third centre of excellence created by Naval Group abroad.**

**This Naval Group R&D centre of excellence will work jointly with Belgian partners in a collaborative laboratory called the MCM Lab. Coordinated by Naval Group Belgium, the MCM Lab was launched on 25 November with a first official meeting and the exchange of the signed convention.**

The MCM Lab is one of the key components of the industrial cooperation plan associated to the Belgian-Dutch remote mine countermeasure replacement program (rMCM) awarded in 2019 to Belgium Naval & Robotics, the consortium made up of Naval Group and ECA Group. This consortium was chosen by the Belgian and Royal Netherlands navies to supply twelve mine countermeasures vessels and a toolbox composed of around 100 drones.



Naval Group, key player in naval defense, brought together the founding partners of the Belgian MCM Lab on 25 November in its Naval Group Belgium offices in Brussels @Naval Group

One of the main objectives of the MCM Lab is to reinforce the Belgian Defence Industry and Technology Base (DTIB) in strategic technologies such as marine robotics, enhanced detection capabilities, artificial intelligence applications, etc, for wider Mine CounterMeasures capabilities.

The strength of this research laboratory is to include partners with complementary technological skills and innovative approaches. It will foster and stimulate a close collaboration between universities, industries and research institutes in order to pursue R&D activities with the aim of accelerating the development of innovations and preparing the evolution of mine warfare systems over time. The MCM Lab's ambition is to become the European reference centre for Mine Warfare Research and Development and will be taking a key role in European initiatives in the mine countermeasures domain.

Philippe Méléard, CEO of Naval Group Belgium, says: "The setup of the MCM Lab is one of the cornerstones of Belgium Naval & Robotics' industrial cooperation plan, with the clear ambition to set up a long-term presence in Belgium in key strategic capabilities through a series of actions satisfying Belgium's Essential Security Interests."

Christian Lainé, Naval Group Belgium Chief Technological Officer and Director of the MCM Lab is delighted with its opening: "The MCM Lab is a collaborative structure where industries and academics share their ideas and develop solutions, made in Belgium, to answer the challenges of Mine Warfare of today and tomorrow. The ambition is that the label "MCM Lab" becomes the international reference for technical solutions covering the different domains of Mine Warfare"

The MCM Lab is a collaboration between Naval Group, Naval Group Belgium, ECA Robotics, ECA Robotics Belgium, ABC (Anglo Belgian Corporation), BATS (Belgian Advanced Technology Systems), DotOcean, Space Applications Services, University of Ghent, Université Libre de Bruxelles and Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ).

Collaborations between MCM Lab partners are already ongoing around high-value capabilities such as robotics, artificial intelligence or acoustic discretion.

Five of the MCM Lab partners are also part of the European project MIRICLE which will be kicked off in early December and aims at defining the future of mine warfare



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**About Naval Group**

Naval Group is the European leader in naval defence. Naval Group uses its extraordinary know-how, unique industrial resources and capacity to arrange innovative strategic partnerships to meet its customers' requirements. As a system-integrator and prime contractor, the group designs, produces and supports submarines and surface ships. It also supplies services to shipyards and naval bases. Attentive to corporate social responsibility, Naval Group adheres to the United Nations Global Compact. The group reports revenues of 3.3 billion euros and has a workforce of 15,798 (data for 2020).

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