



NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2021

ISSUE 1

EDITORIAL

Dear consortium partners, supporters and friends,

BorderUAS has reached the first 9 months, a quarter of its initial timeplan. We started in June 2020 with a young consortium of 19 partners that had to get to know each other so as to align on the principal ideas and implementation directions of our common project.



Dr. Peter Leškovský BorderUAS project coordinator
Vicomtech

Our progress so far:

- We characterized the BorderUAS platform on the technical as well as on the use case level.
- We collected and reviewed the end user requirements and drafted the future technological capabilities of the BorderUAS surveillance platform, focusing on the three principal innovation fronts in the UAV, sensorics and data analytics areas.
- We submitted 12 deliverables on technical, regulatory and organisational matters.

Since the start of the project our activities were marked by the pandemic health situation of COVID-19. All meetings moved to virtual platforms and any possibility of face to face activities were abandoned. Several partners were directly affected by the COVID-19 economic and crisis management situation, limiting their practical engagement in the early months. With this in mind, the consortium applied for an extension of the project by six months, that has recently been granted by the European Commission.

By today I'm happy to say that we managed to overcome the initial hurdles and all partners started to contribute and to shape our common BorderUAS project, and we are pleased to present our achievements and recent developments in this newsletter.

Overall, there is a fair satisfaction with the initial progress of the project. However, we still need to keep on full power to maintain our commitment with the tight schedule and the proximate project goals. Our first official exam will come in a couple of months, in June, when we will be challenged to undergo the first year periodic review. There is time to prepare adequately, but also a lot of work ahead.

Thank you all for your dedication to the project and let's continue with the good will and determination to make **BorderUAS** a flourishing project.

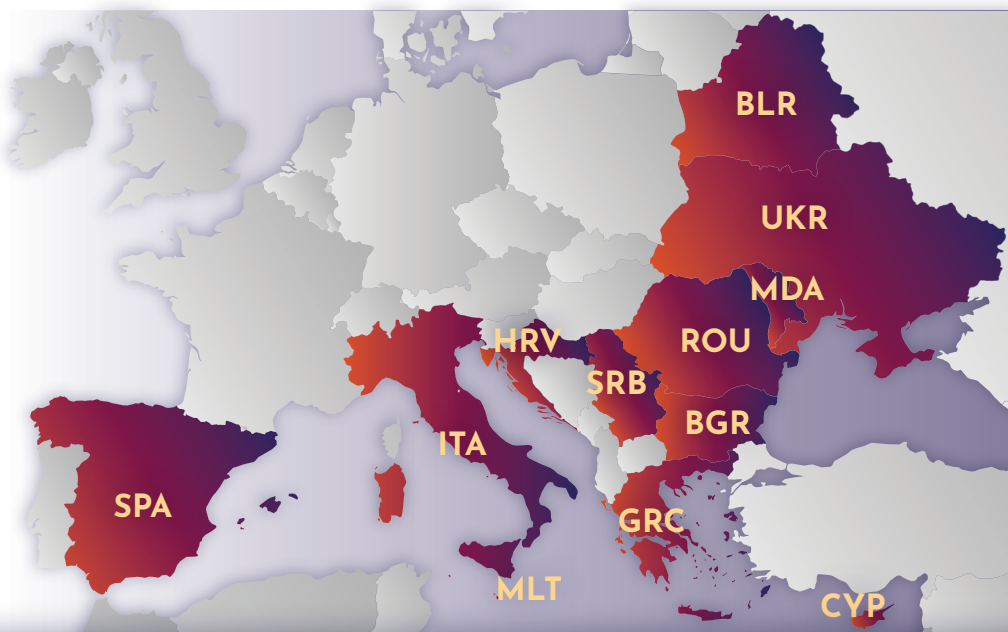
WHAT IS BORDER UAS

BorderUAS is a new H2020 research and innovation project on technologies which **enhance border and external security**. The project is funded by the European Commission with a total amount of about 7 Million Euro.

BorderUAS will combine for the first time a **lighter-than-air unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)** with **sophisticated ultra-high resolution multi-sensor surveillance technology**. The new solution will facilitate **effective border surveillance** and **prevent cross-border criminal activities** by supporting **search & rescue applications**, specifically **rough terrain detection**, improving the **protection of European societies**.

WHO IS INVOLVED

5 RESEARCH CENTERS
6 BORDER CONTROL AGENCIES
6 INDUSTRIAL SUPPLIERS
2 NGOS



Border police units who will validate the BorderUAS solution cover 3 major illegal migration routes into Europe (Eastern Mediterranean, Western Balkan and Eastern Borders Routes). These routes represent 58% of all illegal border crossings detected and are also the most used for smuggling of drugs, weapons and stolen vehicles.

vicomtech
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PROJECT ACTIVITIES

JUN 2020 - KICK OFF

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The project kicked off in a virtual three-day meeting covering a rich agenda concluding to a concrete action plan for the months ahead. More than 40 participants from 12 countries took part!

In July 2020, the project issued its [first press release](#).

NOV 2020 - NICOSIA RISK FORUM

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In November 2020, the project was presented at the [3rd Annual Nicosia Risk Forum](#) #NRF2020 attended by 285 participants, by our consortium partner ADDITESS LTD (ADI). ADI introduced the project, presented the role, scope and the consortium, and then focused on the field trials, concluding with the importance of the field trial results.

DEC 2020 - ONLINE WORKSHOPS

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In December 2020, the BorderUAS consortium, along with the border guard authorities, organized [two online workshops](#) on end-user requirements and scenarios.

Their overall scope was to ensure that the design, layout and implementation of the BorderUAS system were compatible with all the operational needs and challenges facing the EU border region. Discussions generated fertile outcomes for the consortium to offer a BorderUAS platform dedicated to the needs of the partner law enforcement agencies.

FEB 2021 - ALIGNMENT WORKSHOPS

In February 2021, border police units partners met online to discuss first ideas on organization of the pilot trial following a workshop that took place in January. This workshop was an initiative to align on the end user interfaces of the BorderUAS technology.

In the light of European Commission's view to promote the cooperation among EU funded projects, BorderUAS consortium is willing to leverage previous research outcomes and establish strong links with on-going projects.



BorderUAS will join forces with other relevant initiatives through individualized activities, such as joint workshops, to achieve the following:

- Follow or conclude to current **best practices** and **methodologies** concerning efficient **aerial border surveillance**,
- Avoid duplication of work and,
- Create common networks with end-users or with industry partners who are actively involved in the domain of security, specifically in **border surveillance**, promoting the project itself and its outcomes.

CLUSTERING ACTIVITIES

CLUSTERING - FOLDOUT

BorderUAS has already initiated clustering actions with the project **FOLDOUT** - Through Foliage Detection of Illegal Cross-Border Activities (GA no 787021).

On September 2020, the project coordinator received a warm welcome to present **BorderUAS** to the FOLDOUT consortium highlighting common objectives and potential areas of cooperation.

Currently, both consortia are under discussions to set the baseline and the common ground for a **collaboration**; all the relevant updates on this progress will be featured in the BorderUAS news.

Anyone interested in the BorderUAS project for clustering activities, is encouraged to contact us at info@borderuas.eu for a potential new synergy.

ETHICS & HUMAN RIGHTS

IT IS INNOVATIVE, BUT IS IT ETHICAL?



Technology cannot be seen as inherently beneficial or harmful.

Greek legends teach that Prometheus stole the fire from the gods, out of good will to humanity, but the fire was also used for harm and devastation.

The project is envisaged to provide great opportunities for **surveillance** using **unmanned aerial vehicles** to **detect illegal behaviour**.

To avoid any risks related to personal rights, the project includes activities aimed at ensuring the **ethics of scientific research, protection of personal data, use of technology exclusively for civilian purposes**.

A team of professional lawyers from all over Europe and external to the consortium members of the Ethics Advisory Board are currently building a framework for the new technology to strictly meet the project's goals, namely, to help **control illegal migration** and **irregular cross-border activities**, as well as to support relevant authorities on incidents close to European external borders, based on a legal approach of **protecting human rights**.

NEXT STEPS

End of March 2021:

- expected signed collaboration with FOLDOUT
- reaching the first Milestone that closes the period of specifications and design of the BorderUAS solution and starting work on the technological development of the complete system (UAV, sensors and analytics)

June 2021: first year periodic review

CONTACT



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