

- Based in Metropolitan France



"Design in progress" rendering of the future PO.

3 pages à suivre ✓

Euronaval: First Details Of The Patrouilleurs Océanique (PO) Platform Unveiled

Launched on June 10 by the French Minister of Defence, the future ten ocean-going patrol vessels known as PO (Patrouilleurs Océanique) programme will replace the current fleet of aging A69 type PHM (formerly Aviso/light frigates and then reclassified as patrol vessels) based in Brest and Toulon and the Patrouilleurs de Service Public (PSP) or Flamant-class (OPV 54 class) based in Cherbourg.

These new platforms are going to fulfill a range of missions including support for deterrence, presence in areas of sovereignty and interest, evacuation, protection, escort and intervention in the framework of State action at sea.

Confirming the launch of the 'eagerly awaited' programme and the 'considerably increased capabilities (of the vessels) compared to the current situation', during her introduction speech at Euronaval 2020, the French Minister of Defense, Florence Parly, said that 'the first two (PO platforms) will be delivered by the end of the LPM'.

This morning during a press conference, DGA General Delegate for Armaments Joël Barre shed some light on the the project development and time schedule:

"We have started the program preparation phase with Naval Group and the three shipyards that are SOCARENAM, PIRIOU and CMN in order to combine their different skills. This is the preparation phase. Once we launch the realization phase in 2022 or 2023 we will then decided on the industrial organization."

DGA General Delegate for Armaments Joël Barre

According to the Marine Nationale's presentation provided during the recent IQPC OPV International 2020 online conference, the 10-ships component will be delivered between 2025 and 2029, being funded starting with the 2019-2025 LPM.

Offshore Patrol vessel (PO)

Key Figures

- Displacement : around 2000 T
- Length : around 90 m
- Speed : 22 kts
- Autonomy : 5500 Nm / 40 days
- Crew : 50

Sensors & Weapons

- Surface-air and navigation radars, IFF
- Sonar
- Combat Management system
- EO/IR
- 1 RapidFire 40mm, machine-guns

Equipments

- 3 rhibs
- Modular capacity : 1 TEU container
- Retention room
- Deck-landing for 1 medium helicopter ou UAV

- 10 ships (2025-2029)
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- Lifetime : 35 years
- Activity: 140 days at sea / year ; 220 possible
- Required availability: 300 days a year

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With a displacement of around 2,000 tonnes and a length of around 90 meters, the new PO platform will be able to achieve a maximum speed of 22 knots and an endurance of 5500 nm or 40 days of sea operations, revealed the head officer of French Navy's Protection and Safeguarding Office, Future Naval programmes, at the recent IQPC's OPV International 2020 conference.

The new platform lifetime is indicated in 35 years with a requested availability of 140 days at sea per year (aiming to 220) and total availability of 300 days per year. As the design is still in progress, said the French Navy's representative adding that it will be unveiled very soon, no images of the new platform were released. However, a notional vessel silhouette appeared in the presentation showing a large and capable platform with bulbous bow, conventional shafts and rudders, single main mast superstructures and a stern flight deck with a hangar facility.



The PO (Patrouilleurs Océanique) programme will replace the current fleet of aging A69 type PHM (formerly Aviso/light frigates and then reclassified as patrol vessels) based in Brest and Toulon and the Patrouilleurs de Service Public (PSP) or Flamant-class (OPV 54 class) based in Cherbourg.

Among the main features of the new platform, in addition to the smaller new POM (Patrouilleur Outre-Mer, Overseas-based OPVs) platforms capabilities, the French Navy's representative indicated a flight deck and maintenance facilities for one medium-size helicopter as well as a larger unmanned air vehicle. The new PO will also have a retention room and the capability to carry and operate three RHIBs in addition to embark a single standard container for multi-purpose operations.

The new Patrouilleur Océanique will feature, according to the provided presentation, a combat system with a sensor suite including surface-air and navigation radars, IFF, EO/IR as well as an hull-mounted sonar system to monitor the underwater situation in French waters. The latter equipment is unusual on a patrol vessel but is expected to be introduced due to underwater threat increasing around French waters, the protection of SSBN operations, and dual-use operations. Although the French Navy hasn't elaborated, a potential candidate is the Thales BlueWatcher, **already under testing** on the larger *Surcouf* La Fayette-class frigate.

The platform armament has been identified by the French Navy's representative in his presentation's slide as the new **Thales/Nexter RapidFire gun system**, marking the first time the Marine Nationale acknowledges the selection of the system for the defense of her ships. Although the French Navy's representative hasn't elaborated, *Naval News* understood the weapon system has been chosen to satisfy the requirement for a new self-defense weapon system to equip different classes of vessels including the **BRF (Batiments Ravitailleur de Forces)**, PO, other types of ships and the future **European Patrol Corvette (EPC)** platforms.