

AI in Search and Rescue Operations



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European Law Forum: Prevention • Investigation • Prosecution

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News

On 25 and 26 February 2025, Frontex hosted an international [workshop on AI and unmanned systems](#) together with the Italian Coast Guard, which is chairing the European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF). The workshop, entitled "Coast Guard Evolution: Artificial Intelligence and Unmanned Systems Enhancing SAR Operations", aimed to explore ways to foster close and effective cooperation between coastguard functions in order to enhance Europe's collective ability to secure its waters and protect lives at sea. It explored the legal, operational, and technological implications of the introduction of AI in Search and Rescue (SAR) operations. More than 100 participants from 22 Member States, the EU Commission, the European Defence Agency (EDA), the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), together with leading experts in AI and emerging technologies, discussed and shared knowledge on the following topics:

- Benefits and limitations of emerging technologies in both manned and unmanned SAR missions;
- EU initiatives supporting the development of AI-driven tools for coast guard functions;
- The role of networks such as the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) in optimising the cross-border coordination of SAR efforts in migrant emergencies at sea.

Above all, participants agreed that the human element must remain at the heart of any consideration of AI in SAR – and that technology must always serve humanity.

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