



---

## INTRODUCTION

The present report includes a strong security dimension, with three out of four chapters focusing on topics related to security. The last chapter is mainly focused on energy, which however in the current geopolitical context also includes security aspects, as pointed out by a recent [commentary](#)<sup>1</sup> in the Financial Times by Richard Shirreff, former NATO deputy supreme allied commander in Europe.

The first chapter of the report describes recent developments regarding the cooperation between Japan and the EU on the topic of aviation, and in particular Unmanned Aircraft Systems (drones). The second chapter reports about a call from several countries bordering the North Sea and Baltic Sea on increasing threats to maritime safety and security in those two sea basins. Chapter 3 focuses on recent successes by authorities in different EU Member States against drug trafficking. The last chapter provides an overview and analysis on recent cooperation on offshore wind energy in the North Sea.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/f9d1402f-0ce0-4c68-8a4d-46c85ba0fed7>

---

## EU and Japan strengthen their cooperation on drones

The European External Action Service (EEAS) in a [press release](#)<sup>2</sup> reports about the strengthening of cooperation between the EU and Japan on Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). The cooperation takes place in the framework of the EU–Japan Aviation Partnership Project (EU–Japan APP), an initiative by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and Japan Civil Aviation Bureau (JCAB). According to [EASA](#)<sup>3</sup>, the project “*supports long-term engagement between European and Japanese aviation authorities, with a focus on innovation, sustainability, and global regulatory leadership.*” The main areas of cooperation include sustainable fuels, innovative aviation technologies as well as air traffic management and oversight.

In this specific case, EASA and the External Action Service report about the results of a recent workshop on the topic of drones, which took place in Tokyo and Nagoya and provided the opportunity for authorities and industry representatives from both sides to have a dialogue and exchange best practices on practical use cases. The discussions reportedly focused on operational safety aspects as well as ways to guarantee a stable regulatory framework while also fostering innovation.

This form of regular and structured exchange demonstrates a shared understanding of both parties on the relevance and potential of this innovative technology. Both sides appear to prioritise safety and a rules-based approach while also leaving enough room for innovation. In this regard, the EU and Japan seem like-minded partners and the cooperation on drones may also spill over to other technologies and policy domains.

---

## Several countries bordering the North Sea and Baltic Sea warn against maritime safety and security threats

Fourteen countries bordering the North Sea and the Baltic Sea (Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, UK) have recently co-signed and published an [open letter](#)<sup>4</sup>, in which they warn against growing risks to maritime safety and security in the two sea basins. The letter is addressed to “*the International Maritime Community, especially flag and port states, national authorities, flag registries, classification societies, shipping companies, managers and operators as well as seafarers*”.

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/japan/eu-and-japan-strengthen-cooperation-future-unmanned-aircraft-system\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/japan/eu-and-japan-strengthen-cooperation-future-unmanned-aircraft-system_en)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/domains/international-cooperation/technical-cooperation-projects/eu-japan-aviation-partnership-0>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.dma.dk/Media/639050105465966294/NB8%20Open%20Letter%20FI\\_FINAL0.pdf](https://www.dma.dk/Media/639050105465966294/NB8%20Open%20Letter%20FI_FINAL0.pdf)

Among other issues, the signatories address the issue of Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) jamming and spoofing as well as the manipulation of vessel's Automatic Identification System (AIS). In the letter, they call for the recognition of *"GNSS interference and AIS manipulation as threats to maritime safety and security."* They moreover ask to *"ensure vessels have adequate capabilities and properly trained crew as required by international conventions to operate safely during navigation system outages"* and suggest to *"cooperate on the development of alternative terrestrial radionavigation systems which may be used in place of GNSS in the event of disruption, loss of signal or interference"*.

The letter shows that the Baltic and North Sea areas are under continued exposure to hybrid and cyber- threats as well as risks associated with the Russian shadow fleet in particular. These topics are also likely to play into an upcoming EU Industrial Maritime Strategy scheduled for 4 March. According to a draft version, the strategy is considering a support programme for the building of dual-use (civil-military) ferries in Europe that could then be deployed on strategically important routes.

---

## Authorities undertake operations against drug trafficking

According to a [story](#)<sup>5</sup>, among others published in the Belgian news, a country that is often confronted with the phenomenon of drug trafficking, Portuguese judicial police forces have recently seized approximately 9 tons of cocaine from a submarine off the coast of the Azores in the Atlantic Ocean. The operation was supported by authorities from the US and the UK. All the drugs on board had a combined value of approximately EUR 600 million. Reportedly, this is the largest cocaine seizure ever in the country. The vessel, which according to authorities has a shape that makes it hard to detect, reportedly came from Latin America. While the exact origin remains unclear, quite a few indices hint at a link with Colombia. According to experts, sub-marine drug vessels tend to be used in Colombia. Three of the four crew members are of Colombian nationality, while the other one is Venezuelan.

Meanwhile a German news outlet [reports](#)<sup>6</sup> about successful drug investigations in major European ports: in the Port of Hamburg, customs authorities reportedly seized 400 kilograms of heroin for a value of EUR 32 million in a container that was shipped from Singapore. In the Netherlands, an even bigger find is reported: in the Port of Rotterdam, 5 tons of cocaine for a value of EUR 250 million were seized.

These developments show that drug trafficking is an increasingly problematic issue in particular for ports. The trans-national nature requires strong cooperation between law-enforcement authorities at European level and it is expected that the upcoming European Ports Strategy will make suggestions in

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2026/01/27/drugsvangst-duikboot-portugal/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.rnd.de/panorama/drogenfund-in-hamburg-heroin-im-wert-von-32-millionen-euro-in-container-entdeckt-7OS5Y6AFU5A6DJAH5ABYFIR244.html>

this regard. A provisional version identifies drugs smuggling by criminal networks into EU ports as a problem and among others stresses the need to train and protect workers in ports in addressing organised crime and cyber threats. The leaked strategy also considers cooperation with ports in third countries in the fight against organised crime.

---

## Ten countries present a plan to boost offshore wind energy in the North Sea

Several media on the European continent as well as the UK - notably the [Guardian](#)<sup>7</sup> - report about the results of the third [North Sea Summit](#)<sup>8</sup> held on 26 January in Hamburg. At the summit, representatives from nine European countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK), the industry and transmission system operators (TSOs) adopted an '[investment pact](#)'<sup>9</sup> to accelerate the deployment of offshore wind power and grids in the region. Joined for the first time by Iceland and NATO, the nine countries agreed to collectively aim to install 15 GW of offshore wind capacity per year in the North Sea, between 2031 and 2040. They also reaffirmed their joint commitment to reaching 300 GW of offshore wind capacity by 2050 – according to a [non-binding declaration](#)<sup>10</sup> and related [action plan](#)<sup>11</sup>.

The new 'investment pact' and renewed 300 GW commitment for 2050 build on past political declarations and commitments by these countries – in particular the [2022 Esbjerg Declaration](#)<sup>12</sup> and [2023 Ostende Declaration](#)<sup>13</sup>. The nine countries say that "*where necessary and appropriate*", they "*will explore support for projects through, e.g. domestic and cross-border two-sided CfDs (Contracts for Difference) or equivalent price security mechanisms, including strengthening the European PPA (Power Purchase Agreement) market*". The ministerial declaration further touches on the resilience and security of offshore energy infrastructure, and on cybersecurity.

---

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/jan/26/uk-among-10-countries-to-build-100gw-wind-power-grid-in-north-sea?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/jan/26/uk-among-10-countries-to-build-100gw-wind-power-grid-in-north-sea?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/search/north-sea-summit-2026-2401316>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de/Redaktion/EN/Downloads/M-O/nordsee-gipfel-2026/joint-offshore-wind-investment-pact-for-the-north-seas.pdf?\\_blob=publicationFile&v=6&cldee=X21AsIDP7elditHIFmRqyVJxe21S\\_O\\_dJV2ZwNfjLCDWvc88j4Lpy-3FN6VYsDT&recipientid=contact-4132e4e228e4e911a96a000d3a442d3c-20766895ecb54a27affd2fd205d4eb8c&esid=f72aa425-78f8-f011-8406-7c1e5283430f](https://www.bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de/Redaktion/EN/Downloads/M-O/nordsee-gipfel-2026/joint-offshore-wind-investment-pact-for-the-north-seas.pdf?_blob=publicationFile&v=6&cldee=X21AsIDP7elditHIFmRqyVJxe21S_O_dJV2ZwNfjLCDWvc88j4Lpy-3FN6VYsDT&recipientid=contact-4132e4e228e4e911a96a000d3a442d3c-20766895ecb54a27affd2fd205d4eb8c&esid=f72aa425-78f8-f011-8406-7c1e5283430f)

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de/Redaktion/EN/Downloads/M-O/nordsee-gipfel-2026/hamburg-declaration-of-energy-ministers.pdf?\\_blob=publicationFile&v=7](https://www.bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de/Redaktion/EN/Downloads/M-O/nordsee-gipfel-2026/hamburg-declaration-of-energy-ministers.pdf?_blob=publicationFile&v=7)

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de/Redaktion/EN/Downloads/M-O/nordsee-gipfel-2026/action-plan-to-the-hamburg-declaration-of-energy-ministers.pdf?\\_blob=publicationFile&v=9](https://www.bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de/Redaktion/EN/Downloads/M-O/nordsee-gipfel-2026/action-plan-to-the-hamburg-declaration-of-energy-ministers.pdf?_blob=publicationFile&v=9)

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.en.kefm.dk/Media/637884571703277400/The%20Esbjerg%20Declaration%20\(002\).pdf](https://www.en.kefm.dk/Media/637884571703277400/The%20Esbjerg%20Declaration%20(002).pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.government.nl/documents/diplomatic-statements/2023/04/24/ostend-declaration-on-the-north-sea-as-europes-green-power-plant>

The Hamburg Summit demonstrates that European countries bordering the North Sea see joint deployment of offshore wind energy as a key contribution to safe, sustainable and affordable energy. A major challenge is implementation of the ambitious targets, and this is also related to the fact that the new capacities have to be connected to the grid. In the EU, the European Commission has recognised this and has recently tabled a legislative package on grids.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> European Commission press release, 10 December 2025:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_25\\_2945](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_2945)