



Leonardo's Falco Xplorer drone has completed its maiden flight. The largest Remotely-Piloted Air System (RPAS) built by the company, the Falco Xplorer S/N0001, took to the air over the Trapani Air Force base in Italy on January 15, 2020, and spent 60 minutes flying over the Gulf of Trapani in a dedicated fly zone before returning to base.

Making its public debut at the 2019 Paris Air Show, the Falco Xplorer with its 18.8-m (61-ft) wingspan, 24-hour endurance, operating ceiling of over 9,100 m (30,000 ft), and 250 kg (51 lb) payload is designed to provide persistent, multi-sensor strategic Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) for both military and civil customers.

According to Leonardo, the Falco Xplorer is based on variants that are in service with the United Nations and Frontex, the EU's border and coast guard agency. Its sensor suite includes Leonardo's Gabbiano T-80 multi-mode surveillance radar, SAGE electronic intelligence system, an automatic maritime identification system, a signal intelligence suite, and an Electro-Optical (EO) turret.

There's also an optional hyperspectral sensor for environmental and agricultural monitoring as well as a real-time, secure satellite link to C4I (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence) centers for over-the-horizon operations. In addition, the drone isn't subject to International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) and it meets the criteria for Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) class II, so it can be exported worldwide.

The Falco Xplorer is currently undergoing a series of test flights to assess the capabilities of the airframe and the integrated sensor system, as well as certifying that the aircraft meets NATO's airworthiness STANAG 4671 criteria, which will increase its operational territory.

The final part of the Falco Xplorer's maiden flight can be seen below.

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\*\* Leonardo

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