

Lorient, 11th September 2026

KERSHIP launches the first OPV 60M for the Montenegrin Navy

A new major milestone in the strategic partnership between France and Montenegro



Kership – Launch ceremony for the OPV Petar I Njegos I on 11 September 2026 by Antoine Borzeix

KERSHIP, a joint venture between PIRIOU and Naval Group, this Friday 11th of September 2026, launched the **PETAR NJEGOS I**, the first of two OPV 60M offshore patrol vessels ordered by Montenegro, at its Lanester shipyard.

The ceremony, marking a major milestone in the programme, was attended by numerous Montenegrin and French dignitaries, including **Mr. Aleksa Bečić, Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Dragan Krapović, Minister of Defence of Montenegro, Ms Dubravka Lalovic, Ambassador of Montenegro in France, Ms Cécile Humbert-Bouvet, Ambassador of France in Montenegro**, as well as representatives of the French and Montenegrin authorities, local elected officials and the French Defence Procurement Agency (Direction Générale de l'Armement – DGA).

The launch of the **PETAR NJEGOS I** comes less than two years after the contract was signed between the Montenegrin Ministry of Defence and KERSHIP. It demonstrates the strong momentum and depth of the cooperation between France and Montenegro in the fields of defence and maritime sovereignty.

The first OPV will now undergo further outfitting and trials before being delivered to the **Montenegrin Navy in April 2027**. The second vessel, **PETAR NJEGOS II**, is also under construction and is scheduled to be launched during the **first quarter of 2027**.

The launch of this first OPV comes just a few months after **French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to Montenegro** in May. On that occasion, President Macron highlighted the close defence and industrial cooperation between France and Montenegro, of which the OPV programme is a concrete and emblematic example.

A programme strengthening Montenegro's maritime capabilities

With these two OPV 60M vessels, Montenegro is significantly strengthening the capabilities of its Navy and its contribution to maritime security missions.

Located at the gateway to the Adriatic Sea, Montenegro occupies a strategic position at the heart of the European maritime space. The new patrol vessels will enable the Montenegrin Navy to perform a broad range of military and civilian missions, including **maritime surveillance, protection of strategic infrastructure, border control, counter-piracy and counter-trafficking operations, search and rescue, pollution response, humanitarian assistance and the deployment of Special Forces**.

The Montenegrin OPV 60Ms feature specific adaptations designed to meet the operational requirements of the Montenegrin Navy, notably a **CBRN cell and hull-mounted sonar**, as well as dedicated capabilities for diver and Special Forces operations. They are also equipped with **POLARIS® mission management system by Naval Group**.

Mr. Aleksa Bečić, Deputy Prime Minister, said: *"The launch of PETAR NJEGOS I is an important milestone for Montenegro and for our strategic partnership with France. This programme translates our commitment to strengthening the capabilities of our Navy and our ability to protect our maritime space, while contributing fully to collective security in the Adriatic, within the framework of our NATO commitment and our European path. We welcome the work carried out by the Montenegrin, French and KERSHIP teams to make this project a reality."*

French-Montenegrin cooperation serving maritime sovereignty

The programme for the two OPV 60M vessels is part of the **defence agreement signed between France and Montenegro in April 2024**. It benefits from the support of the **French Defence Procurement Agency (DGA)** and contributes to the broader European cooperation framework aimed at strengthening Montenegro's defence capabilities.

The construction of the vessels brings together the expertise of **KERSHIP and PIRIOU**, as well as Naval Group's expertise in combat systems and equipment. Throughout the programme, a team from the Montenegrin Navy, supported by the DGA, is monitoring the construction alongside the French industrial teams, ensuring that the vessels fully meet the operational requirements of the Montenegrin Navy.

Marie Eugénie Cotelle, President of KERSHIP, said: *"The launch of PETAR NJEGOS I is a great source of pride for the teams at KERSHIP. It marks the successful outcome of the work undertaken with our Montenegrin partners and demonstrates the ability of our naval industry to design and build defence vessels in France tailored to the specific needs of foreign navies. Beyond the vessel itself, this programme illustrates the strength of a partnership based on trust, industrial excellence and a shared ambition to contribute to maritime sovereignty and the security of Europe."*

The next major milestone in the programme will be the **delivery of PETAR NJEGOS I to the Montenegrin Navy in April 2027**, while **PETAR NJEGOS II is scheduled to be launched during the first quarter of 2027**.

This program confirms the suitability of the OPV 60M, designed by PIRIOU and ordered by Montenegro to KERSHIP. It features a proven and versatile design that combines endurance, operational capabilities, and adaptability. Its design enables it to carry out missions related to maritime sovereignty and security in demanding operational environments.

KERSHIP, to mark the occasion in a manner that was both solemn and original, invited two local artists for the event: Anna Boulic, a Franco-Australian singer and harpist who blends jazz, blues and opera, performed the French and Montenegrin national anthems during the launch ceremony for the OPVPETAR NJEGOS I, evoking a deep sense of emotion amongst the audience. Francine Dupont, a painter largely inspired by the sea, created a painting live as the ship was launched. Once completed, the artwork will be presented to the Montenegrin Navy.

Main technical characteristics of the OPV 60M

- **Overall length:** 62.95 m
- **Beam:** 9.50 m
- **Draft:** 2.70 m
- **Hull:** steel
- **Superstructure:** aluminium
- **Displacement:** approximately 550 t
- **Maximum speed:** 21 knots
- **Accommodation:** 24 crew members + 16 special personnel
- **Range:** 9,700 nautical miles
- **Propulsion:** 2 fast diesel-electric engines, 2 fixed-pitch propellers
- **Stabilisation:** Active system
- **Manoeuvring:** 2 rudders and 1 bow thruster
- **Logistics:** 7.5 t crane at 8 m with winch; capacity for 2 x 20-foot containers
- **Intervention boats:** 2 x 6.80 m RHIBs on rear ramps
- **Armament:** 1 remotely operated 40 mm CTA gun and 2 remotely operated 12.7 mm machine guns
- **UAV:** 1 aerial drone
- **Specific equipment:** CBRN cell, hull-mounted sonar
- **Other capabilities:** Diver and Special Forces facilities
- **Mission management system:** POLARIS® by Naval Group

About KERSHIP

KERSHIP specialises in the design and construction of ships of up to 100 metres in length, dedicated notably to State Action at Sea. Created in 2013 through the strategic alliance between **PIRIOU**, France's leading independent shipbuilding and ship repair group, and **Naval Group**, the world leader in naval defence, KERSHIP benefits from an exceptional industrial and technological heritage.

With a substantial portfolio of projects for both the French Navy and foreign navies, PIRIOU and KERSHIP demonstrate their ability to meet the most demanding requirements in terms of security and maritime sovereignty.

Press contact : Ms Stéphanie ROOS FAUJOUR – Agency Sea to sea | +33(0)2-29-40-10-36 | +33(0)6-19-68-32-06 | contact@seatosea.fr

