

Aviation industry calls for urgent action on drone safety

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The European Regions Airline Association (ERA*), together with ECA, IATA, EHA, ACI EUROPE, IACA, A4E, IFALPA, IFATCA and CANSO, have jointly called for a number of urgent measures to be taken to ensure the safe operation of drones and to preserve the high level of safety in European airspace.

Recreational and commercial use of drones is rapidly becoming popular and, as a result, incidents and near misses between aircraft and drones are on the increase. Irresponsible use of these remotely piloted aircraft systems constitutes serious safety risks that are often underestimated, and now European aviation stakeholders are calling for an extensive action campaign to tackle the issue.

The Joint Statement calls for:

- an extensive public campaign to raise awareness of the safety risks, drone use liabilities and responsibilities of drone operators;
- compulsory registration of all drones at the time of purchase or resale, allowing the owner/pilot to be traced;
- encouraging owner/pilot compliance with national and European rules and regulations;
- mandatory training and a certificate/license for drone pilots, depending on the properties and performance of the drone and the nature of operations;
- built-in technical performance limitations such as geo-fencing and altitude/distance restrictions, to reduce the safety risks concerning critical airspace, terrain, and buildings;
- in-depth research into the effects of collisions between drones and manned aircraft;
- integration of recreational drones into national Model Aircraft Flying Regulations, ensuring the same high safety standards for recreational users;
- increase in the effectiveness of rule enforcement by national authorities, including training and technical equipment for their staff to be able to monitor and ensure compliance.

Simon McNamara, ERA Director General, says: “The recent increase in drone incidents around European airports has highlighted the risks we are facing from unsafe drone use. Irresponsible use of recreational and commercial drones puts air passengers in danger and can have extremely serious consequences. This joint statement by the industry shows that we are ready to help put in place a robust EU-wide safety framework to ensure the safe operation of drones.”

A copy of the full joint statement can be downloaded from this page: <http://www.eraa.org/policy/airspace/remotely-piloted-aircraft-systems-rpas>

To arrange an interview with an ERA representative, please call Satu Dahl, Corporate Communications Manager, ERA, on + 44 (0)1276 485582, +44 (0)7713 984792 or email satu.dahl@eraa.org.

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* Founded in 1980, ERA is a non-profit trade association representing some 200 companies involved in European air transport. The Association promotes the interests of intra-European airlines by lobbying the European Commission and other European regulatory bodies on policy matters, promoting the social and economic importance of air transport and its environmental commitments.