
Drones: new EU-wide rules to boost safety and privacy

- Drones and drone operators to be registered
- They will have to comply with EU safety and privacy criteria
- Safety plans to identify aviation risks earlier

The first ever EU-wide rules for the civil use of drones were agreed by EP and Council negotiators on Thursday morning.

Currently, drones lighter than 150kg, which is in fact most of them, fall under the jurisdiction of national authorities and therefore EU manufacturers and operators are subject to different design and safety requirements.

According to the informal agreement reached on Thursday morning, the design and manufacture of drones will have to comply with EU basic requirements on safety, security and personal data protection.

The EU Commission is tasked with defining more specific requirements, for instance on what kind of drones should be equipped with features such as altitude limits, maximum operating distance, collision avoidance, flight stabilisation and automated landing.

EU countries will need to ensure that operators of drones that can cause significant harm to people, i.e. by crashing into them, or present risks to privacy, security or the environment, are registered. These drones will also need to be individually marked to be easily identified.

The aim is to provide a uniform level of safety across the EU and greater clarity to drone manufacturers and operators to help in boosting the sector.

Identifying civil aviation risks earlier

The agreed regulation also updates EU safety legislation for the aviation sector. With air traffic set to double in the next decades, the aim is to create a more flexible, risk-based system at EU and member state levels, which allows potential threats to be identified earlier, while maintaining a high level of safety and ensuring that European industry remains competitive.

Member states and the Commission will also boost cooperation in aviation security matters, including cyber-security.

150,000

jobs could be created by the drone industry by 2050 (European Commission)

Quote

Rapporteur Marian-Jean Marinescu (EPP, RO): “The agreement today is very good news for air passengers and industry. I am satisfied that I succeeded in introducing all the EP proposals in the final text.”

“Provisions on drones constitute the first EU-level rules for these new participants in air traffic. The rules will ensure safety, security and protection of privacy for EU citizens.”

Next steps

The provisional deal now needs to be approved by the Council of Ministers (EU governments) and the European Parliament as a whole, before it can enter into force.

Quick Facts

Drones to be covered by EU safety rules are those that in the case of impact against a person, can transfer energy above 80 joules.

Civil drone technology could account for an estimated 10% of the EU aviation market within the next 10 years (i.e. about €15 billion per year). According to the Commission, the drone industry could create some 150,000 jobs in the EU by 2050.

Further information


[Procedure file](#)


[EPRS briefing: New civil aviation safety rules \(January 2017\)](#)

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