



AME's European Drone Digest

*Almost everything you need to know about aerial mobility in Europe...
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3rd Issue - 4th Quarter 2023

AME's Interview Corner



**This Quarter's Conversation with: Maria Algar
Ruiz - EASA Drones Programme Manager**



In December 2021, the EU published the Drone strategy 2.0. Since then, quite some work out of that strategy has already been undertaken. What are the priorities among the 19 flagship actions in the strategy for EASA and how are these priorities set?

The flagship actions for EASA laid down in the Drone Strategy 2.0 are not prioritised within the context of the strategy itself. However the implementation approaches and dates for these actions are described by the Agency in the European Plan for Aviation Safety (EPAS). As an example, many of the actions are included in RMT.0230, as they relate to Innovative Air Mobility (IAM) and Vertical Takeoff and Landing (VTOL) capable aircraft. With our Opinion N 03/2023 and the subsequent regulations from the Commission, once adopted, we will have addressed some of the actions, at least for the first implementation phases. The priorities for tackling the actions are set by the Agency, taking into account the feedback on the safety aspects as well as the availability and maturity of the technical concepts. We also factor in feedback provided by the European industry and the Member States through our advisory bodies as well as in dedicated consultation.

What are the most significant outcomes yet from work EASA has undertaken on flagship actions?

With Opinion 03/2023, we have addressed action 1 partially, and 4 and 8 in detail, at least for the initial phases of operations. We are also working on a flagship action related to the implementation of sustainable IAM hub, an IT platform to provide information to all the various stakeholders for IAM, for which we will have a minimal viable product (MVP) available by the end of this year. One important stakeholder group is the general public, who have concerns and

expectations for the safety, security and environmental impact of this new form of aviation.

Are there any flagship actions not yet tackled where EASA will kick-start work in the near future?

Yes, for instance the more detailed work on SERA for UAS operations in the specific category. We still need some fundamental demonstrations and validations of more advanced concepts to be able to change any existing rule in SERA. However, the SERA framework allows for the development of best practices and commonly agreed principles that ensure compliance with the overall safety objectives. We need to work on this.

Looking at the top and political level, we are heading for a period of change: EASA will get a new Executive Director and European elections are coming up next year. To what degree is the steady progress of EASA's work on the flagship actions dependent on continued political support?

Of course we can't make any predictions about the directions and policy in the coming years because we are indeed in a period of change, as you say. There can also be external factors which affect our priorities and ability to deliver, but are beyond our control. For now, though, we are continuing to tackle our agreed work programme, defined by EPAS. This plan is revised, consulted and agreed with industry and the Member States every year. For the immediate future, so in 2024, we will follow this plan, which gives us the direction we need until further notice.

Regulatory Developments & Curated Reads



Regulatory Developments

European parliament Report "electric aviation – a solution for short and mid-range flight"

The member of the European Parliament Erik Bergkvist, has drafted the report "Electric aviation – a solution for short and mid-range flight". The draft report discuss the benefits and the technological challenges of aircraft electrification, and it also mentions eVTOL. In the text it is reported that: *"50-55 % of emissions could be reduced by shifting to SAF, 30-35 % by deploying new technology, 5-10 % by optimising aircraft operation and infrastructure, and 5 % by opting for new market-based measures"*. Ultimately, the report calls for the Commission to develop a strategy and a legislation to facilitate the development of aircraft electrification. You can find the text [here](#).

EASA reshuffle of Stakeholder Advisory Body

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency is currently in the process of reorganizing its Stakeholder advisory Body (SAB) whose current format stems from 2016. The SAB is the formal industry advisory body for EASA. Going forward, it will for the first time give full representation to the drone and IAM

community. AME is strongly engaged in this reorganisation process which means that members of AME have the opportunity to be even deeper involved in EASA's work on drones and IAM.

EASA proposes rules for VTOL operations, including air taxis

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency has proposed rules for safe operations of Vertical Take-Off and Landing aircraft (VTOL), which includes air taxis, paving the way for these innovative aircraft to take to the skies in Europe's cities.

The [Opinion](#) introduces a comprehensive set of operational requirements for piloted electric air taxis, spanning the domains of operations, flight crew licensing, rules of the air and air traffic management. The proposed rules also establish criteria and processes for the certification and maintenance of drones.

Once adopted, the Opinion will complement already existing EU regulations and guidance material for operations of unmanned aircraft, specifications for vertiport design, unmanned traffic management known in Europe as U-space, and the certification of VTOL-capable aircraft.

EASA Activities over the summer

EASA has shared an update of all its activities during the summer and several documents were made available on the EASA website [Civil drones \(unmanned aircraft\) | EASA \(europa.eu\)](#) related to:

- Demonstration of compliance for the design of the UAS
 - The [Means of Compliance with Light-UAS.2512 – M2 technical mitigation medium robustness](#) was published. This adds to the other 2 Means of compliance previously published:
 - [Means of Compliance with Light-UAS.2511 - Enhanced containment](#)

- **Means of Compliance with SC Light-UAS FTB – Functional test based**
 - The first outcome of the ‘SHEPHERD’ project assessing the technical content of the standards that may be used to show compliance with the regulatory requirements of operations in the specific category (SORA, SC Light UAS and U-Space) was published [SHEPHERD \(UAS Standards\) | EASA \(europa.eu\)](#). EASA is assessing the results to develop Means of compliance.
 - EASA, with the support of national aviation authorities and standardisation bodies, is working on more means of compliance for the other points of the ‘Special condition light UAS’ (SC Light UAS) and for a means of compliance allowing operators and manufacturers to declare compliance for UAS operated in SAIL III. They will be published for consultation soon.
- **Guidelines on noise level measurements for drones below 600 kg.** Since a methodology dedicated to noise measurement of small drones was missing, EASA developed a new one, tailored for this product, with a proportionate cost. Manufacturers are invited to use it and to communicate the results of the measurement to EASA in order to gain an understanding of the noise performance of small drones in the different configurations.
- We start to have drones with class mark in Europe. The list of drones that completed the certification process has been published [Open Category - Civil Drones | EASA \(europa.eu\)](#). Some manufacturers are still in the process to make these products available on the EU market. When you buy a new drone and you are looking for one with a class mark, please make sure you check that the class mark is shown on the box and on the body of the drone.

- An [EASA Operations Manual example for UAS operations in SAIL II](#) was published. This is just an example (developed with the support of national aviation authority, under the leadership of LBA) that UAS operators may use when developing an operation manual for a SAIL II operation. Other approaches on operation manual structure may still be used. Based on the feedback that EASA will collect, the example will be improved. In addition, EASA is working with the national aviation authorities and JARUS to develop examples of operation manual for each PDRA and for a SAIL III and IV operations.
- A study on the Vulnerability of Manned Aircraft to Drone Strikes was published [Vulnerability of Manned Aircraft to Drone Strikes | EASA \(europa.eu\)](#). A workshop (hybrid) is planned on 25 October. For registration and information please consult <https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/newsroom-and-events/events/vulnerability-manned-aircraft-drone-strikes>

Launch of SESAR ATM Master Plan Review Group

SESAR JU has decided to update its existing ATM Master Plan which dates from 2016. The SJU has launched its ATM Master Plan review officially on the 11th of October. This is a major document that guides policy-making, strategy and funding for the ATM and drone sector over the rest of this decade. On the 25th and 26th of October, the first full meeting of the SESAR ATM Master Plan Review Group including the expert working groups will take place in Braunschweig. AME is honoured to be part of this SESAR ATM Master Plan review process.

SESAR Annual Conference

SESAR JU held its annual conference in Brussels on the 10th of October. The

conference hosted more than 300 stakeholders, with high level political participation. The conference showcased ongoing SESAR projects and new initiatives. This was complemented by an exhibition showing some 35 ongoing SESAR projects, giving a great overview of the different projects and work areas that exist in the SESAR context. AME took part in the event in its role as a founding member of SESAR3, and in its role as communication leader in two SESAR projects: [BURDI](#) and [EUREKA](#).

SESAR 3 JU Exploratory Research call HORIZON-SESAR-2023-DES-ER-02

Please find here the link to the Exploratory Research call 2: [Funding & tenders \(europa.eu\)](#) This call has opened on 29 June and will close on 15 November.

Unifly and Skypuzzler ApS Cooperation

AME is proud to communicate that two of its members, [Unifly](#) and [Skypuzzler ApS](#), join forces to revolutionise the drone infrastructure technology. They will cooperate in a Eureka Network Eurostars project. The two industry leaders have joined forces to combine their cutting-edge solutions. Unifly's Unmanned Traffic Management solution and Skypuzzler's Digital Air Traffic Control will empower drones to fly beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) while avoiding collisions with other drones, airspace users, and obstacles.

STEAMUP EDUCATION! - Event on November 1ST 2023

The [DRONEMASTER Academy](#) will hold a the STEAMUP EDUCATION! conference in Berlin on the 1st of November. The conference wants to create a forum for alternative approaches to education and training for the age of transformation, as traditional educational structures are struggling to keep up with this fast pace of change. The conference will explore how vocational education and training can accompany change in the aerospace industry. In

particular it will discuss the The project "[AMTech - the development of an aviation aerospace mechatronics technician curriculum](#)," funded by the Erasmus+ program. You can register to the conference [here](#).

Worthwhile attending

- 23 October, EUROCONTROL Webinar Series - "[Will drones cover our skies? - USSP systems, technologies and competencies](#)"
 - 26 October, EUROCONTROL Webinar Series - "[Introduction to UAM risk, noise and visual pollution](#)"
 - 27-30 November, SESAR [Innovation Days](#)
 - 28-30 November 2023 - [European Rotors, Madrid](#)
 - 5-7 December 2023 – [ICAO DRONE ENABLE 2023 Symposium, Montréal](#)
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