

Press Release

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ERA calls for tougher laws and enforcement for drones

- As drone-related incidents around airports continue to rise, ERA calls for more robust and harmonised EU-wide safety regulations.
- Necessary steps needed to prevent the flying of unregulated drones near airports and aircraft.

With a growth in both commercial and recreational markets, drone manufacturers and operators are seeking greater access to airspace, including that in which commercial aircraft are operating. Recent incidents in the surroundings of European airports, in particular today's situation at London Gatwick Airport, are an illustration of the threats we are facing. The lack of regulation with regards to the ownership and use of drones has been of great concern to ERA for a long period of time and it is now time for tougher laws and enforcement to be put in place.

Drone operations in a regulated and monitored environment can have vast commercial benefits; however, the use of drones by an individual with little knowledge of airport and airspace infringement and/or disregard to aviation safety in general can cause both major disruption and pose a serious threat to the safety of an aircraft. From impact on windshields to being ingested by an aircraft engine, the result could be catastrophic.

Montserrat Barriga, ERA Director General, says: "The use of airport geo-fencing systems which track the trajectory of a drone will go some way to combating this menace, but it is now a priority to toughen laws and create larger no-fly zones around airports. Equally, considering more drones are likely to be given as gifts this Christmas, it is clear more education must also be given to ensure the public know how to fly in a safe and sensible manner. In the meantime, it is imperative that all governments take the necessary steps to expedite the regulation process of drone operations, both commercial and recreational."

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* Founded in 1980, ERA is a non-profit trade association representing 50 airlines and 151 companies involved in European air transport and is the only association representing the entire spectrum of companies involved in European aviation. The association promotes the interests of 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.

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