

European Aviation Safety Agency

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The European Aviation Safety Agency is the centre piece of the European Union's strategy for aviation safety. Our mission is to foster and provide efficiently the highest common standards of civil aviation safety and environmental protection in Europe and worldwide.

In 2002, the Basic Regulation 1592/2002 established Community competence for the regulation of the airworthiness and environmental compatibility of products. Since its creation, the Agency has therefore been developing and implementing common safety and environmental rules at the European level for an ever safer and cleaner civil aviation in Europe. To achieve this objective, the Agency has to:

- Draft aviation safety legislation and provide technical advice to the European Commission and the Member States;
- Monitor the uniform implementation of European aviation safety legislation in all Member States through inspections, training and standardisation programmes;
- Certify specific types of aircraft, engines or parts;
- Approve aircraft design organisations world-wide; and production & maintenance organisations outside the EU;
- Coordinate the European Community programme SAFA (Safety Assessment of Foreign Aircraft) regarding the safety of foreign aircraft using Community airports;
- Perform data collection and analysis, as well as research to improve aviation safety.

Based in Cologne since 2004, EASA already employs more than 350 professionals coming from all Member States and will continue in the coming years to recruit highly qualified specialists and administrators, in order to consolidate its position as Europe's centre of excellence in aviation safety, which provides the European aviation industry with common specifications, cost-efficient services and a single point of contact. To achieve this goal, EASA works hand in hand with the National Aviation Authorities, which continue to carry out many operational tasks, such as certification of individual aircraft or licensing of pilots. The Agency is also developing close working relationships with counterpart organisations across the world, which aim at harmonising standards and promoting best practices in aviation safety world-wide.

The scope of EASA's competence presented above has just been extended to air operations, flight crew licensing and oversight of third country operators with the adoption of the new Basic Regulation 216/2008, which was published in February 2008. EASA is now actively developing the corresponding Implementing rules. The publication of NPAs is planned in Spring 2008, for an expected adoption in 2009. Once these rules will be adopted, the Agency will fully exercise its new responsibilities.

As a further step, a second extension of EASA's competence is in preparation, which will include the responsibility of the safety regulation of airport operations and air traffic control services. The Opinion on aerodromes was published in December 2007, and the Opinion on ATM/ANS is about to be issued. The Commission could then issue a legislative proposal by June 2008.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems

Turning to Unmanned Aircraft, the Agency has been drafting a policy for their certification, as described in more details in a dedicated article of this Yearbook. Considering that the Agency has already received three applications for certification of UAS, this policy needs to be finalised in a very short term.

EASA is not working in isolation on this subject and has already established useful contacts with ICAO, FAA, EUROCONTROL, TCCA, EUROCAE, NATO and the European Defence Agency. This cooperation was recently illustrated at the occasion of the workshop organised by the agency on 1 February 2008 (see http://www.easa.europa.eu/ws_prod/g/g_events.php for further information).

More precisely, EASA will participate in the ICAO study group recently created, and has agreed with FAA and TCCA to communicate about any activity initiated by one of them in the field of UAS. As regards EUROCONTROL, EASA maintains regular contacts, be it in the context of general coordination or specific meetings, or through its participation in workshops. NATO is also considering inviting the Agency to its FINAS working group. Next, the Agency reports regularly to the EUROCAE working group WG-73. At this occasion, the WG-73 was asked to work on certain tasks identified in the Comment Response Document established by EASA after the A-NPA consultation. Finally, it is EASA's intention to build on the first contacts established with the European Defence Agency.

National Aviation Authorities are not excluded from this cooperation. The Agency collaborates with NAAs on issues relative to unmanned aircraft with a maximum take-off mass below 150kg, for which Member States are competent, in order to exchange information and ensure consistency. Finally, this cooperation is not limited to Institutional partners. For example, the Agency participates regularly in events organised by UVS International and is most grateful for such invitations.

As a conclusion, I would like to re-iterate the Agency's interest in UAS and to ensure that we are willing to cooperate and contribute to the development of a comprehensive UAS regulatory framework, which is a key issue to allow a safe and successful development of this activity. Furthermore, the recent extension of EASA's scope will allow us to address operations and licensing issues for UAS in addition to the airworthiness and maintenance items we are already in charge of.

