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#### NOTE

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council

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Subject:	AOB for the meeting of the <u>Transport</u> , Telecommunication and Energy Council on 4 December 2025  Advancing administrative simplification and strengthening security in the civil drone sector  - Information from Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, <b>Romania</b> , Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain
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The civil drone industry stands as one of the most dynamic and promising sectors within European mobility and aviation. With applications ranging from logistics, agriculture, infrastructure inspection, mapping, and emergency response to future passenger and goods transport, drones are a cornerstone technology for the continent's digital and green transitions. The European Union possesses the industrial capacity, technological expertise, and academic excellence to assume a leading role in this domain.

However, extensive consultations with operators, manufacturers, training institutions, enforcement bodies, and the Joint European Drone Association reveal that the current regulatory framework does not adequately reflect the sector's evolving needs.

## **Reducing Administrative Complexity and Operational Constraints**

While safety remains paramount, certain provisions and procedures are overly complex, rigid, and impose disproportionate burdens. This hinders innovation, discourages investment, and limits the deployment of valuable applications. For instance, the requirement to maintain a horizontal distance from uninvolved people equal to the flight altitude—with a minimum of thirty meters—creates significant operational constraints. This limits the feasibility of beneficial operations such as building inspections and real-time traffic monitoring in urban and semi-urban environments. Moreover, the administrative burden for simple, medium-risk operations remains unnecessarily high. This results in extensive documentation and long preparation times, hindering operational agility, delaying market access, and slowing innovation. A simplified risk assessment should suffice for most routine, medium-risk operations.

To unlock the potential of these activities while maintaining safety, we call for a comprehensive review of the current framework to support a modern, proportionate, and forward-looking approach, building on the exchanges already underway with EASA.

## **Strengthening Security and Airspace safety**

Efforts to simplify administrative procedures must be accompanied by robust security and safety measures. The increasing misuse of civil drones in hybrid threat contexts highlights the urgent need to reinforce the security dimension of the European drone ecosystem.

While national security remains the exclusive competence of Member States under Article 4(2) of the Treaty on European Union, a coordinated EU-level approach would offer clear added value—particularly in threat analysis, protection of critical infrastructure, and the development of secure and resilient technologies. This would enhance collective preparedness and crisis response capacities, in line with the EU Security Union Strategy, the European Drone Strategy 2.0, and the Union’s broader ambition to build a resilient, secure, and competitive Europe. It is also critical to ensure that the chosen technical measures truly achieve their intended objectives—something the current framework cannot guarantee.

### *Securing the Skies: Identifying Allies, Isolating Threats*

To ensure legitimate drone operations and strengthen oversight, it is essential to distinguish between compliant actors and those who pose risks to public safety. Therefore, it is essential to establish a system that ensures legitimate drone operations are both visible and traceable to the relevant authorities.

We recommend mandating the inclusion of the operator registration number in Remote ID data for all drones or operations subject to operator registration. This system would enable authorities to reliably link each drone to its registered operator, ensuring accountability and enhancing traceability. Additionally, drones should be technologically restricted from takeoff unless the operator ID is correctly entered and broadcast. This would allow detection infrastructure to differentiate authorized drones from potentially illegal or unauthorized ones, enhancing oversight and intervention capabilities. Such measures would contribute to the safety of airspace users, public areas, and critical infrastructure while simplifying at the same time the work of enforcement authorities. A harmonized approach is essential to avoid regulatory fragmentation, ensure interoperability, and uphold the integrity of the European ecosystem.

### *Sharing the Skies: Safe Coexistence of Manned and Unmanned Aviation*

Achieving the EU's U-space safety objectives requires the safe coexistence of manned and unmanned aircraft. The current regulatory framework leaves a gap in ensuring that all aircraft are electronically detectable. We advocate for a legal foundation that supports electronic conspicuity for aircraft in situations where it is required., thereby strengthening airspace safety, supporting Member States' implementation efforts, and advancing the Union's strategic objectives for integrated air mobility.

To address the dual imperative of simplification and security, we advocate for a comprehensive review of the existing civil drone regulatory framework. This should aim to introduce targeted improvements that balance safety, security, transparency, and economic development. In particular, we recommend revisiting relevant delegated and implementing acts with attention to:

- Establishing a risk-based approach that recognizes technological mitigation;
- Streamlining administrative processes for standard operations;
- Strengthening enforcement capabilities through digital identification and monitoring;
- Promoting interoperability and harmonization across EU Member States.

The European Union has the opportunity to become a global leader in safe, sustainable, and innovative drone integration. Achieving this requires a regulatory framework that evolves alongside technological advancements and market demands. We urge the Commission to give full attention to this dossier and adjust the European Drones Strategy 2.0 so that it better balances security, safety, privacy, and economic growth.

A modern, proportionate, and future-oriented regulatory framework is essential to unlock the full potential of drones in Europe—for citizens, businesses, and governments alike.