European Union Aviation Safety Agency

FAQ n.132027

FAQs:

Model aircraft , Drones (UAS), Regulations

Question:

EASA's Basic Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 (as the name indicates) is the top-level regulation that defines the main scope of EASA's functions and its limits in terms of delegation provided by the European Commission. On this basis, the EU UAS Regulation states in the recitals: '(27) Since model aircraft are considered as UAS and given the good safety level demonstrated by model aircraft operations in clubs and associations, there should be a seamless transition from the different national systems to the new Union regulatory framework, so that model aircraft clubs and associations can continue to operate as they do today, as well as taking into account existing best practices in the Member States'. Has this indication been taken into account? If so, how?

Answer:

Yes! When drafting the legislation, we took into consideration the multiple comments provided by European aeromodellers. This is the main reason why the legislator' has not introduced new restrictions for European aeromodellers. The regulator offered instead three options to pilots of model aircraft:

1. **Operate within the framework of a model aircraft club or association (according to Article 16)** Model aircraft clubs and associations provide an environment emphasising a strong safety culture and, in many cases, offering extensive guidance, safety information and courses to their members and the wider model flying community. This creates a safety culture that all pilots operating within the framework of the model aircraft club or association are willing to follow. Model aircraft clubs and associations may receive from their national aviation authority an operational authorisation that sets the conditions for the operation of model aircraft. This can be based on relevant national rules or the established procedures defined by the club or association. The limits defined by the authorisation may be different from those for the 'open' category (e.g. flying with drones/model aircraft heavier than 25 kg, at a height more than 120 m, etc.). EASA considers this the best way to operate model aircraft.
2. **Operate in a UAS geographical zone where drone and model aircraft operations are**

exempt from some of the ‘open’ category requirements (according to Article 15) States may identify geographical zones where drone and model aircraft operations are exempt from some of the ‘open’ category requirements (e.g. flying with drones/model aircraft heavier than 25 kg, at a height more than 120 m, etc.). Each pilot operating in these zones can benefit from these exemptions.

3. **Operate in subcategory A3 of the ‘open’ category** All model aircraft may be operated in subcategory A3, following the operational limitation defined in the Regulation. New ‘ready to fly’ model aircraft (sold as a complete system) purchased after the 1st of January 2023 need to have a C4 class identification label if they are to be operated within the ‘open’ category. This label will ensure that the aircraft comes with proper instructions from the manufacturer. The requirement for C4 labelling does not apply to privately built (or assembled) model aircraft.

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