



OPENING SPEECH

Koen De VOS

DG MOVE, European Commission

DG MOVE is in charge of making safety policy. We are also a parent Director General of both EASA (European Aviation Safety Agency) and SESAR, which is the Single Sky research tool to integrate and to come up with a new ATM (Air Traffic Management) system of the future. We also work in the field of RPAS (Remotely Piloted Aircraft System) to come up with the integration of RPAS. That's why I'm happy to be here and share our current reflections.

My first statement is that nothing has been decided. We have adopted a policy document in which we are in reflection mode. What roles should we come up with? Where can we look at best practice? We are in listening mode. So if you have good ideas, you are very welcome.

Jobs and growth are the slogans of the new commission. Jobs and growth are what we have to deliver. The big question is how to use these new technologies to create jobs and growth in Europe. We want to see jobs and growth created by the aviation industry, by manufacturing, by operators, but above all in the wider economy. Drones (RPAS) could be used to increase the competitiveness of our companies. That's the name of the game.

We must also try to protect our citizens against infringements of their fundamental rights, as Patrick Gandil already mentioned. The issue of privacy is a big challenge.

We have to strike the balance between opening the market by creating safety rules to best use new technologies, and protect the citizens, and then strike the balance between those fundamental objectives.

We talk about new technologies. It's worth mentioning that as early as 1916 Nikola Tesla, one of the nice guys, imagined swarms of electric drones flying around the airspace. Patrick Gandil mentioned Jules Verne one hundred years ago, I mention Nikola Tesla. There has been a huge evolution and now I am happy to be representing European states where we have the highest number of approved operators. C'est une belle réussite de la DGAC, c'est une belle réussite aussi de l'industrie. Well done! That is what we would like to see throughout Europe.

I am an official, I am not a technology expert, but it seems a very promising technology, comparable to the mobile phone technology of the nineties. We would like to see this technology take off.

And at the same time, as Patrick Gandil mentioned, how on earth do we regulate it? You have very small drones flying around and drones as big as a 40 tons aircraft. We are confronted with a completely new type of operations. They can take off from private gardens, private places, public spaces and so on. So we are confronted with a wide variety of devices and a wide variety of operations.

How can we promote these activities in Europe? Again, this means striking the balance between safety, innovation and privacy. The Commission in April 2014 adopted a policy document where it sets out its main ideas. This is Commission document 2014 207. Reference will be made to it in the presentation of my colleague from DG Enterprise (Thierry Buttin).

I forgot to mention that we are not confronted with the traditional suspects, the traditional aviation industry. We are confronted with SMEs – Small and Medium Enterprises. How can we adapt our rule-making, our processes to SMEs, where you have only a few people working in the business? How can they cope with a very complex regulatory structure and regulatory processes? We have to take due account of all this. So the Commission is thinking hard and is looking at the current state of play.

What is the current situation? What rules currently apply? Here in France, you are lucky, you have a set of rules to promote non-complex operations, as Patrick Gandil already explained. And you have been very successful. I already mentioned that you have the highest number in Europe of approved operators. This is good, an excellent start.

Now, French legislation starts with making the distinction between small and other drones. Small drones are defined as machines with a maximum take-off weight of 2 kg. These criteria are very important, because they have a structuring effect on the market. By imposing a specific limit, in France of 2 kg, if I were a manufacturer and I wanted to produce my aircraft for a specific market and type of operation, I would make sure that my aircraft including its payload would not exceed that 2 kg limitation. So that is important.

Patrick Gandil explained where this criterion came from and what safety justification lies behind it.

I like birds but I am not an ornithologist, but I would like to invite you to come to Austria, where you have buzzards of 5 kg. And to go to Denmark where there are buzzards of 7 Kg, apparently, and those are the limits set in those countries. And the biggest flying species apparently lives in the UK. Up to 20 kg, but without fuel and battery.

We are confronted with a whole set of national rules which have a structuring effect on the market, which have their own logic.

Every time, there is a safety reason behind it. And the safety reasons of specific member states are not questioned. But we just note that if you want to develop a European market, we are confronted with a fragmented market.

The international aspect is immediately there. You want to buy your drone from your desk in France, from outside France. This is international. But if you want to operate trans-border, for example, if you are doing something in the vineyards in Bourgogne or in Bordeaux and then you want to fly in the Rioja, you will be limited.

These are the consultation issues we are confronted with. And then we still have to ask the more fundamental question, to what extent is maximum take-off rate so fundamental in assessing safety risk? We should also include speed and as the French legislation does, take due account of where are you flying, above the centre of Paris, or above the Atlantic to inspect wind farms. These are completely different sets of issues. And if you want to inspect wind farms in the Atlantic with a huge

airborne device, this is not the same as a small device flying above a crowd of people. So we have to somehow integrate a wide range of safety parameters into our thinking into the rules.

We are confronted with a situation where we risk ending up with 28 different rules for the smallest drones, and with a clear distinction between the small drones, below 150 Kg and the larger drones above 150 Kg, where you have European competence. Here EASA has the competence to develop rules which then are adopted by the Commission.

If we want to produce jobs and growth, we need to build a strong integrated market. This is not what we say, but what the overwhelming majority, 90% of the people said when they replied to our online consultation on drones and our future policies. So everybody agrees that a strong European integrated market is the means to achieve our final objectives.

So, we come back to our initial question, what to do? We are considering a combination of measures, a set of measures. First of all, we have the regulatory tools at our disposal, common rules. To what extent do we have to produce common rules for large drones, small drones, or for the whole market? These are open questions. We have to come up with research and development. That is why I mentioned SESAR and seeking to deliver the missing technologies. We provide technical support. Here I look to DG Enterprise and not the Director General of the Commission to help in financing small and medium enterprises.

Coming back to the regulatory framework, the core business of DG MOVE, a global market requires global rules. We are in a situation where there are no global rules, as yet. We have a white sheet of paper. So why not try to work immediately towards global rules and global standards? And that's why the Commission is committed to work within an international body, joint authorities for rule-making on un-manned systems, JARUS.

We want to develop these rules in the international field in accordance with a philosophy making regulations as light as possible and as precise as necessary. We are aware that we need to have these safety rules in place. Safety opens up the market. The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) is already preparing rules and engaging within JARUS. The Commission is reflecting on a regulatory framework where we have to deal with all the relevant "patches."

I have emphasized safety. But beyond safety, we have security, privacy, and liability. We have to think about what we must put in place to achieve the common market. We don't say that we have to regulate our drones specifically in these various areas, but we must make sure that manufacturers and operators can cope with and respect all the rules. On R&D we are working on programme to define specific tasks. These must ensure that RPAS are integrated into the future ATM master plan.

The conclusion is that we need not concentrate all our efforts on different kinds of buzzard, ranging in weight from 2, 5 to 7 kg. The European regulatory machinery is beginning to be set up. We have the European RPAS Steering Group (ERSG) roadmap. We have held conferences and congresses. We have now adopted a first communication of policy document. We are running an impact assessment process and it will deliver. What exactly, we don't know yet, but we are in listening mode to make sure that we meet our final objective of preparing a European market.

We have to think in three layers:

- The highest layer is at European Commission, European Council and European Parliament level. The Commission can propose something which can be adopted by Council and Parliament at European level? They are the legislator. The Commission can propose, they have to adopt.
- The second layer is EASA. EASA is to prepare rules of implementation.
- The third layer is Industry. It has a very important role to play. They have the possibility of setting industry standards. And they must, of course, ensure the compatibility of those standards with the different layers.

The challenge is to organize a partnership between all the stakeholders and between these layers of thinking. There must be one motto commonly adopted, but locally applied. I repeat, we should try to strike the balance between safety rules, innovation and privacy. Where we end up we will see in the coming months. We expect something by the middle of 2015.