



## VII. EUROPEAN DRONE FORUM

# PROGRAM

17-18 February 2025 | Düsseldorf, Germany

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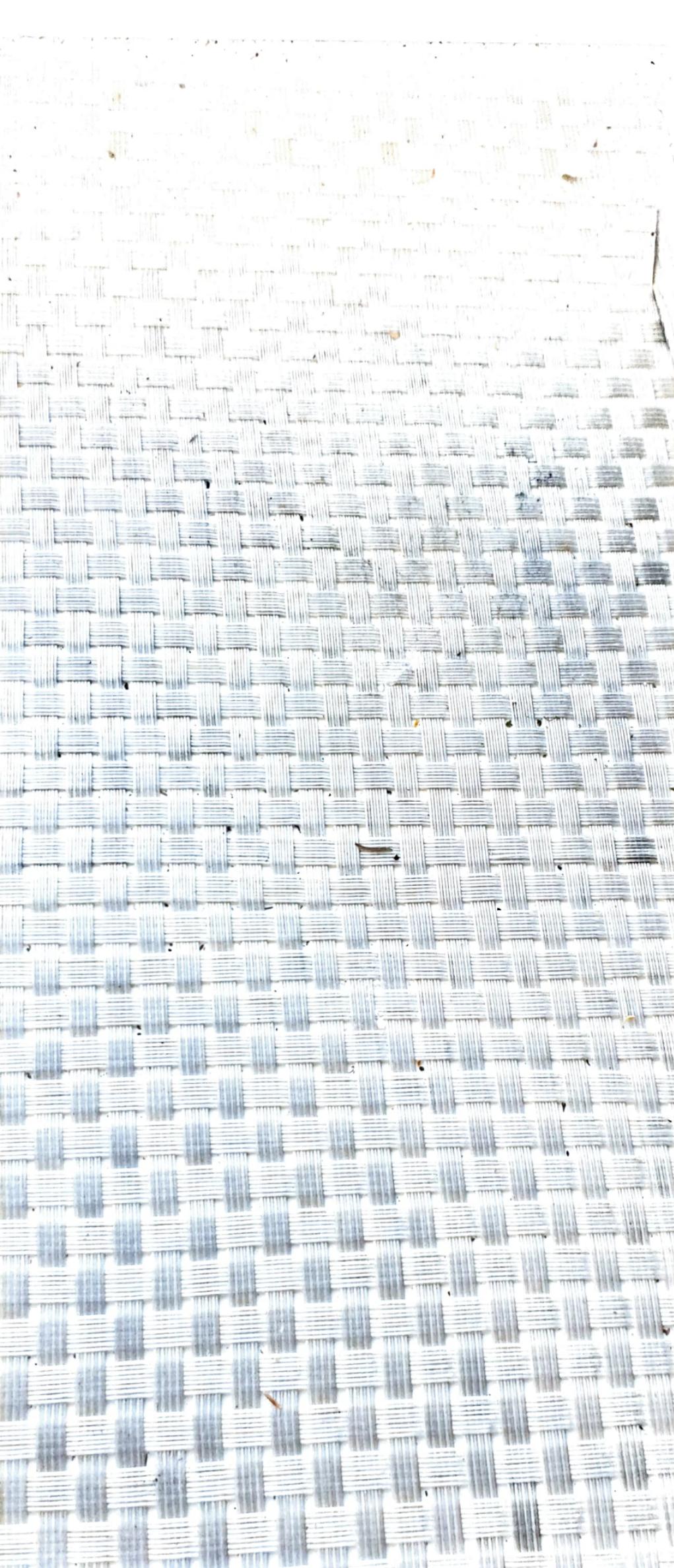
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# What's done – What's next?

**Presentation** 17 February, 09:55 AM–10:30 AM

## Update on current regulations for UAS operations in Europe

The EU drone regulation has been in effect for four years. It's time to leverage the experience gained to propose improvements and simplifications. Adjustments can help streamline processes, reduce complexity, and better align with industry needs – while maintaining the required level of safety.

A key aspect of this effort is fostering collaboration between regulators and the industry to share operational data, incident reports, and best practices. This exchange is essential for evaluating the regulation's effectiveness and identifying areas where requirements can be refined without compromising safety. EASA is committed to establishing a coordination framework that brings aviation authorities and industry stakeholders together to develop collaborative proposals for regulatory changes. These proposals will shape the future of UAS operations in Europe, enabling continued growth, innovation, and harmonization.



**Natale Di Rubbo**  
 European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)  
 Drone Project Manager  
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Natale Di Rubbo is an EASA drone project manager. Since 2016, he has coordinated the development of drone regulations for operations in the open and specific categories in the EU. Before joining EASA, he was employed as an Air Force officer in the Italian Military Airworthiness Authority. He was the project certification manager of several manned and unmanned military aircraft. He holds a degree in Electronic Engineering and a Master in International Relations and Affairs.

The European drone industry must unite its efforts to present regulators **with a clear and actionable roadmap** to foster a safe and thriving drone market



# The same procedure everywhere?

**Presentation** 17 February, 09:25 AM–09:55 AM

## What it means to operate identical UAS missions in different countries

**T**he European Union's harmonized drone regulations promised to create one of the world's largest integrated markets for drone services. But how harmonized are those regulations in practice?

The Royal Dutch Touring Club ANWB's Medical Drone Service together with the Drone & Vertical Mobility Academy, a project by the Fédération Internationale

de l'Automobile (FIA) to support mobility clubs worldwide entering vertical mobility, recently put this to the test: Operating the same beyond visual line of sight mission across three countries – the Netherlands, Austria, and Switzerland – all controlled from a single control center in the Netherlands. This project revealed both the progress made and the remaining hurdles in achieving true regulatory harmonization. In his presentation – „The same procedure everywhere? What it means to operate identical UAS missions in different countries“ – Nicolas Brieger will share insights from cross-border operations and explore how addressing the challenges faced could unlock the full potential of Europe's drone economy.



Company/Organization: **Nicolas Brieger**  
Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA)

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Nicolas Brieger heads the Drone & Vertical Mobility Academy of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA). In this role, he enables over 80 million mobility club members in 241 FIA Member Clubs worldwide to harness the potential of emerging vertical mobility technologies. He has been working in the drone sector for 15 years, co-founding Germandrones and consulting in the security and defence sector.

Europe has all the pieces to lead the global drone economy – **we just need to connect them!**

# Flying Smart

**Presentation** 17 February, 12:00 PM–12:20 PM

## Managing Icing Risks to Maximize UAS Uptime and Safety

Icing is a safety risk for manned aircraft operating at high altitudes and poses a critical threat to unmanned aerial systems (UAS), even near the ground. Especially during autumn, winter, and spring, when temperatures are around freezing and visible fog is present, ice can accumulate on the aircraft even at low altitudes. This leads to increased drag, higher power consumption, and reduced lift, which can quickly escalate into an uncontrollable issue and thus a significant safety hazard.

Recent tests in the climate wind tunnel at Rail Tec Arsenal have demonstrated that UAS can enter critical flight conditions within just a few minutes. This presentation will showcase experimental findings and highlight potential solutions for protecting unmanned systems. Various systems, including passive coatings, electrothermal heating, and innovative fluid-based technologies, will be compared.



**Reinhard Puffing**

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Reinhard Puffing holds a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering with a degree in aeronautical engineering and has over 15 years of experience in aircraft icing and de-icing. His focus is on the safe operation of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles in icing conditions, with a particular emphasis on unmanned systems in recent years. He is the Managing Director of the Austrian Institute for Icing Sciences and Deputy Chairman of the Austrian Association for Drones.

**Icing can become a problem within minutes**, jeopardizing commercial drone operations – but innovative protection systems are on the way.



# SORA 2.5 – on the way to version 3.0

**Townhall Debate** 17 February, 11:15 AM–12:00 PM

## Milestone or never-ending story for Europe?

The Specific Operational Risk Assessment (SORA) is a tool to help standardize unmanned aircraft systems operations inside and beyond Europe. With wise foresight, an SORA update based on users' experiences was scheduled early. The latest global update, developed to improve the ease and effectiveness of using the risk assessment methodology, is serialized into two steps: SORA 2.5 and SORA 3.0. With the release of SORA 2.5 by the Joint Authorities on Rulemaking for Unmanned Systems (JARUS) in June 2024, harmonization between member states will be favored over local interpretations. This is key for the industry's development in Europe. However, significant rulemaking challenges regarding autonomy, multiple simultaneous operations, and air risk still hinder some use cases from happening or scaling up at the moment.



**Host: Julie Garland**



Joint European Drone  
Associations (JEDA)

**Jörg Dittrich**  
Company/Organization:  
Position/Function:  
Website:  
LinkedIn:

„Achieving a common understanding of SORA's workings across authorities and operators alike will help create a level playing field for global drone applications.“

**JARUS**  
Joint Authorities for Rulemaking on Unmanned Systems

JARUS  
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Jörg Dittrich is a Senior Expert on Drone Regulations at the DLR Institute of Flight Systems and advises the German federal government and the German Aviation Authority LBA on applying rules and regulations for unmanned aviation and their continued development. Since December 2022, Jörg is leading the workgroup "Safety and Risk Management" of the Joint Authorities on Rulemaking for Unmanned Systems (JARUS) and is the responsible coordinator for the development of the operational risk assessment tool SORA.

### Nathaniel Apter

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Position/Function:

Website:

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Nathaniel Apter previously worked for the Digitisation & Innovation Team at the Federal Office of Civil Aviation Switzerland before founding UASolutions. In addition, he is a Board Member of the Drone Industry Association Switzerland (DIAS) and a Member of the JARUS SORA v2.5 Main Body Task Force.

„A healthy regulation is one that can evolve over time to accommodate the experience of regulators and technological changes.“

UASolutions  
Founder & CEO  
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# One year Remote ID

**Presentation** 17 February, 02:00 PM–02:20 PM

## Expectations met, lessons learned

In recent years, Dronetag from the Czech Republic has become a globally recognized player in Remote ID solutions. It is widely integrated into UTM, C-UAS, and fleet management systems across APAC, the US, and the EU.

At Dronetags, they strongly believe that Remote ID receivers are a game-changer for the drone industry, offering real-time airspace monitoring that ensures safety, regulatory compliance, and operational efficiency. These advanced devices identify drones, their operators, and flight telemetry data, providing critical support for Unmanned Traffic Management (UTM) systems, security agencies, and first responders. Dronetags vision centers on creating safer airspace through digitally visible drones and advanced unmanned traffic management systems. In his presentation at the EUROPEAN DRONE FORUM, Lukáš Brchl will summarize „One year Remote ID – Expectations met, lessons learned“.



**Lukáš Brchl**  
Dronetag  
Co-founder & CEO  
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Lukaš Brchl is the CEO and Co-founder of Dronetag. Its innovative approach earned Dronetag a spot in the NATO DIANA accelerator, where the company applies its civilian market expertise to aerospace innovations. With a background in drone building, software development, and machine vision research, Lukas combines technical expertise with an entrepreneurial drive to push the boundaries of drone technology.

Remote ID receivers empower first responders and security agencies by providing **real-time drone detection and airspace awareness**, enabling safer operations and quicker decision-making in critical scenarios.



# Same, but different

**Townhall Debate** 17 February, 12:20 PM–12:50 PM

## Diverging approaches for U-Space implementation

**S**ince 26 January 2023, the so-called U-Space areas can theoretically be set up in Europe. These specially designed geo-zones were devised to ensure safe flight operations in areas with a (potentially) high volume of UAS operations.

While some politicians and regulators have great expectations regarding U-Spaces, the industry looks at what could lie ahead with mixed feelings. Because increased safety in flight operations is one thing. More effort and higher costs are another. EU member states and Switzerland, which has adopted the EU legal framework for operating unmanned aircraft systems, have some flexibility in implementing U-Spaces. However, avoiding market fragmentation through interoperable solutions is essential for the drone economy. Nevertheless, no standard approach is to be expected. Long story short: Market fragmentation regarding the implementation of U-spaces seems inevitable.



**Host:**  
**Prof. Dr. Karsten Benz**  
**DRONIQ**



„While Member States have flexibility in implementing U-space, avoiding market fragmentation through interoperable solutions is essential.“

### Amanda Boekholt

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Position/Function: Acting Head Technology and Innovation Section

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Amanda Boekholt is the Acting Head of the Technology and Innovation Section at the Federal Office of Civil Aviation (FOCA) and Treasurer of the Global UTM Association (GUTMA). In Switzerland, she is deeply involved in implementing U-space. As Co-Chair of the InterUSS Platform Advisory Council, she promotes solutions like the automated test suite, enabling compliance with common industry standards and regulations through ecosystem-wide collaboration.

### Dr. Jan Dirks

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Before Dr. Jan Dirks became a member of the Unmanned Aviation Project Group of the Federal Ministry of Digital and Transport in 2020, he was responsible for political strategies and innovations in the sea and inland port sector in the Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport for 15 years. Before that, he spent several years at the Research Center for Work, Environment, Technology (artec) at the University of Bremen, dealing with issues of international norms and standard setting in international merchant shipping.



# Detect & Avoid

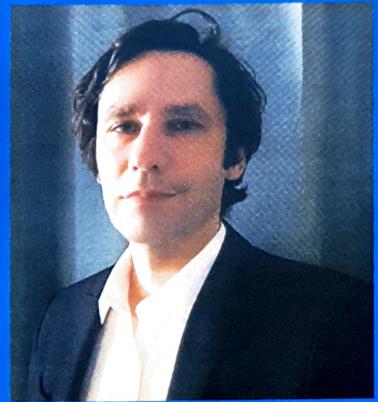
**Presentation** 17 February, 03:00 PM–03:25 PM

## Paving the way to equal rights for any aircraft

Operating manned and unmanned aviation in a fully integrated airspace requires mutual awareness among all participants. Detect & Avoid (DAA) is a key technology for ensuring the safe operation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) in non-segregated airspace. DAA provides collision avoidance as a safety net and „remain well clear“ for operational separation, enabling UAS integration into controlled and uncontrolled airspace and emerging frameworks like U-space.

To safely integrate UAS, **we must progress step by step**. Given the technical and operational challenges, it's essential that industry, regulators, and authorities collaborate closely, each contributing their expertise and responsibilities.

Given this and the increasing number of UAS operations, some technical challenges need to be addressed to ensure the optimal level of safety, such as achieving the required detection and tracking performance and verifying overall performance in complex



**Julien Farjon**  
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Julien Farjon is the Head of Unmanned Aircraft Systems Research and Technology at Safran Electronics & Defense. He is currently responsible for overseeing all research and technology activities related to Unmanned Aircraft Systems. Additionally, he led the development of the RTCA DO-387 Minimum Operational Performance Standards (MOPS) for EO/IR sensor systems used in Detect & Avoid operations. He is also responsible for the EUROCAE WG105 activities related to Detect & Avoid systems at very low altitudes.

environments. While progress is being made, further regulatory development is needed, particularly in non-certified and emerging airspaces. Ongoing collaboration between industry, regulators, and national authorities is crucial to ensure the safe integration of UAS and align technological advancements with regulatory frameworks.



# BVLOS operations

**Townhall Debate** 17 February, 02:20 PM–03:00 PM

## Why doesn't Europe trust in working techniques?

The operation of UAS beyond the visual line of sight is essential in many use cases and applications to be able to operate in an economically sustainable and, not least, competitive manner. However, it is often difficult to obtain the necessary approvals, especially in BVLOS operations. But why? After all, it is no secret that reliable technology is available. So the question is: How could the existing obstacles to BVLOS operations in Europe be cleared?



**CANSO**

Host:  
**Dr. Eduardo García**  
CANSO



„Let's implement  
U-space.“

### Andrew Hately

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Position/Function:  
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Andrew Hately is a senior researcher in the Drone team at the EUROCONTROL Innovation Hub in France. He is the technical coordinator of the CORUS five project which is revising the U-space Concept of Operations previously written in the CORUS and CORUS-XUAM (CORUS extension for Urban Air Mobility) projects, in which he held the same role. He also participates in other U-space research projects, including SPATIO, U-ELCOME, and EUREKA. Andrew is a member of the ICAO Advanced Air Mobility Study Group and a member of the team running the European Network of U-space Stakeholders.

### Robert Leake

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Robert Leake is the Head of Commercial Sales at Quantum Systems. He has worked in the drone industry for nearly 15 years worldwide and has been deeply involved in developing the geospatial drone market and technologies. From an aviation background, Robert is passionate about the safe and sustainable integration of drone technologies into our airspace and daily lives.

„A simplified, future-proof, and consistent BVLOS framework is needed to enable the next generation of drone companies and operators to flourish.“



**QUANTUM  
SYSTEMS**

# With milk and sugar?

**Presentation** 17 February, 04:00 PM–04:20 PM

## How to create a successful drone delivery service

The mission of MANNA Drone Delivery is to improve the world by making lightning-fast suburban deliveries affordable, green, and safe.

Urban drone delivery services for products promise faster, eco-friendly deliveries but require addressing key challenges. After many successful drone delivery operations, the Dublin-based company identified some clear guidelines that help establish commercial UAS operations.

Gain support by engaging communities, addressing privacy concerns, and partnering with local restaurants to showcase benefits like reduced traffic and quicker deliveries. Minimize disturbance with quieter drone technologies, considered operating hours, and designated flight paths. Collect feedback to adapt strategies. Use energy-efficient drones and implement battery recycling. Optimize routes to lower emissions and enhance efficiency. Scale operations to reduce costs. Centralized hubs and tiered pricing ensure affordability while meeting diverse customer needs. Equip drones with real-time route optimization to navigate urban areas efficiently and also to keep staff numbers as low as possible. Collaborate with regulators and integrate services with restaurants. Focus on exceptional customer experience through timely deliveries and user-friendly apps.



**Kevin Houston**

MANNA Drone Delivery  
Head of Regulation  
[www.manna.aero](http://www.manna.aero)

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Position/Function:

Website:

LinkedIn:

Kevin Houston, a Chartered Engineer, spent 28 years in the Corps of Military Engineers of the Irish Defence Forces at home and overseas. He moved to the lead technical position within Civil Defence in Ireland where he founded the then largest drone operation in Ireland to support the search for missing persons. His many years of experience in this field led the serial entrepreneur Bobby Healy, CEO of MANNA Drone Delivery, to bring Kevin onto the start-up team in 2019 as an experienced person to navigate the regulation space. Kevin is currently serving a second term as President of Drone Alliance Europe.

By tackling these areas, urban drone delivery, like Manna Drones already provides, can revolutionize food logistics, balancing innovation with community and environmental responsibility.

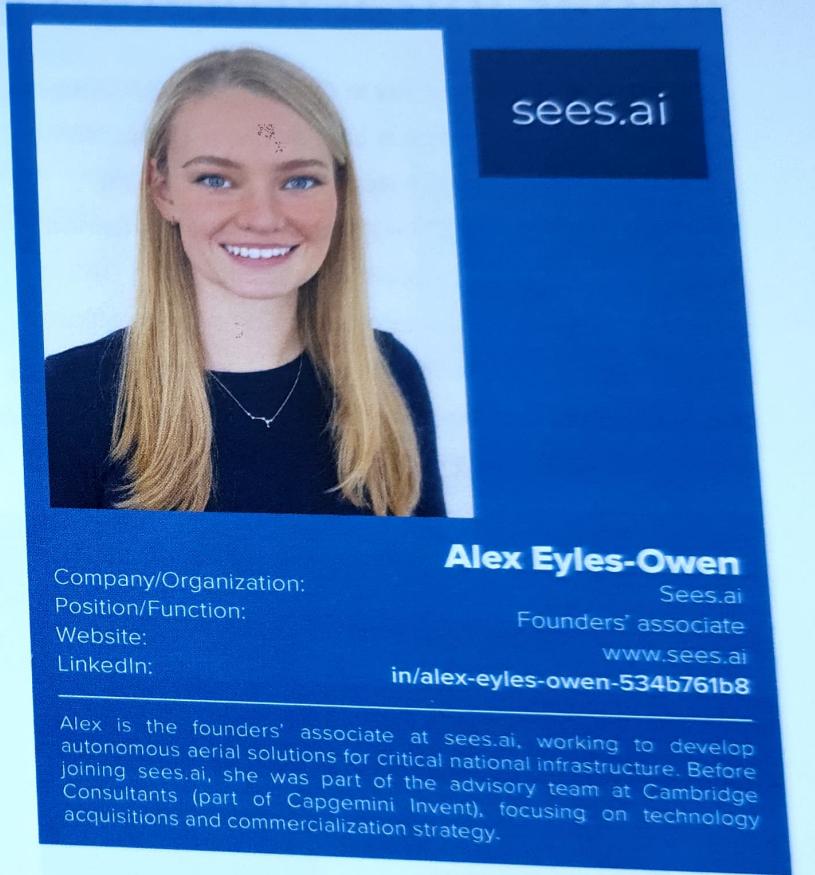
Society is ready for **drone delivery** but it needs to be brought on the journey.

# How to make your business flying

Inventing an airplane is nothing. Building it is a start. Flying is everything. This is how Otto Lilienthal summed up his fascination with flying. In the words of the famous aviation pioneer, one could say: Building a drone is easy, building ten drones is doable, and building a hundred drones is the real challenge. Especially when the necessary money is lacking to invest in scaling up the business. To put it another way, money isn't everything, but without money, everything is nothing.

No matter whether you are a UAS manufacturer, drone operator, or software developer: without the necessary cash, even the best business idea cannot be successfully placed on the market in the long term. But there is no one-size-fits-all solution for how to get partners, investors, or loans. But there are tricks and tips for getting your business airborne.

Striking the right balance of funding sources is critical to being able to **successfully navigate the complex regulatory landscape** while establishing traction and a viable business model.

A professional portrait of a young woman with long blonde hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark top and a necklace. The background is plain white.

sees.ai

**Alex Eyles-Owen**  
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Founders' associate  
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Alex is the founders' associate at sees.ai, working to develop autonomous aerial solutions for critical national infrastructure. Before joining sees.ai, she was part of the advisory team at Cambridge Consultants (part of Capgemini Invent), focusing on technology acquisitions and commercialization strategy.



# Against all odds

**Presentation** 17 February, 04:55 PM–05:20 PM

## We need opportunities to inspect linear infrastructure with UAS

**C**learing Obstacles to Commercial UAS Operations in Europe is crucial for the companies organized in the Application Group „Line Inspection“ at UAV DACH – Association for Unmanned Aviation. There is an apparent demand for using UAS in the entire linear infrastructure sector to enhance efficiency and precision and to open up a vast potential for carbon reduction. However, significant challenges remain, as demonstrated by a Thyssengas project, where current regulation resulted in less than 70% coverage by UAS, necessitating a return to helicopter inspections.

Pipeline inspections are recurring tasks with fixed locations, enabling economical drone flight setups as they are reusable. UAS can significantly improve infrastructure operators' safety, efficiency, and environmental compatibility. At the same time, the industry can tap into a substantial market for drone service providers – as long as regulatory support is provided. In his presentation, Dirk Schmidt from Thyssengas will highlight the specific demands of the infrastructure sector for regulatory authorities and drone service providers.



Thyssengas

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Dirk Schmidt  
Thyssengas  
Product manager  
UAS-based network inspections

Dirk Schmidt, who holds a geography degree, has been a specialist in drone inspection and geo-AI at Thyssengas GmbH in Dortmund since 2020. Prior to this, he held various leadership and development roles in GIS and drone service companies in Germany and Austria. His extensive experience includes positions as a GIS researcher and product manager in academic and commercial settings. He is currently the spokesperson for the UAV DACH Application Group "Line Inspection".

Monitoring critical infrastructures serves public safety and therefore **requires extended permits**.

# clearing obstacles

**Townhall Debate** 17 February, 05:20 PM–05:50 PM

## What the industry needs to get airborne now

Marc Kegelaers, Co-Founder and Chairman of ADLC - A drone logistics company, has a clear opinion. "The Drone industry is still very much in its infancy. You could compare it to a startup. Like any startup, it has to establish credibility." Matthias Moroder would agree that hurdles still need to be cleared. But he would always insist that the drone industry is ready to take off. The technology is mature, and regulations show progress. But scaling up still requires a joint effort. "Regulators and operators must collaborate to turn obstacles into stepping stones, ensuring scalable drone operations through a balance of safety, trust, and real-world applicability," says the Co-Founder and CTO of FlyingBasket, an Italian-based manufacturer of heavy-lift drones. Marc Kegelaers and Matthias Moroder will discuss the current state of the industry and try to detect obstacles to commercial UAS operations and find ways to clear them.



**Host: Máté Puszta**  
Irish Aviation Authority  
RÍSH AVIATION AUTHORITY  
UDARAS EITLOCHTA NA HÉIREANN



### Matthias Moroder

Company/Organization:

Position/Function:

Website:

LinkedIn:

Matthias Moroder is Co-Founder & CTO of FlyingBasket, a manufacturer of heavy-lift drones. In 2015 together with his brother Moritz, they founded the cargo drone startup in the Italian Alps. After nearly a decade of development and gathering experience, FlyingBasket launched their commercial product, FB3 — 100kg heavy lift drone, which is now revolutionizing transportation for applications like logistics, energy, forestry, construction, and delivering tons of goods & materials.

„The Drone industry is still very much in its infancy. You could compare it to a startup. Like any startup, it has to establish credibility.“



### Marc Kegelaers

Company/Organization:

Position/Function:  
Website:  
LinkedIn:

While active as a flight Instructor and CEO of a flight school for professional pilots, Marc Kegelaers became active in the drone sector more than 13 years ago. His experience encompasses creating and running a training organization for drone pilots, leading UNIFLY, and creating a drone delivery company (ADLC). With his vast background in a wide range of activities in the sector, Marc has a good view of what is needed for the industry to thrive.

ADLC—  
A drone logistics company  
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„Regulators and operators must collaborate to turn obstacles into stepping stones, ensuring scalable drone operations through a balance of safety, trust, and real-world applicability.“



# Bridging Perspectives

**Keynote** 18 February, 09:15 AM–09:45 AM

## Policy and Industry Insights on Innovative Air Mobility Safety

Unmanned aviation and the commercial use of drones require a reliable, enabling framework and public acceptance. Rules and procedures for the safe integration of UAS and eVTOLs into shared airspace are key to this. Just as in manned aviation, a harmonized regulatory approach is crucial to enhance safety, strengthen stakeholders' trust, and make UAS operations easier in different regions worldwide. As the Innovative Air Mobility (IAM) industry evolves, the intersection of regulation, certification, and industry-driven innovation plays a critical role in shaping the future of airspace integration. But how can regulatory collaboration and industry leadership ensure both progress and aviation safety in the evolving IAM Landscape? Many challenges must be tackled, and bridging perspectives between regulators and Industry stakeholders seems decisive.



Host:  
**Michael Robbins**  
AUVSI



Host:  
**Dr. Gerald Wissel**  
UAV DACH  
ASSOCIATION FOR UNMANNED AVIATION

**Rachel Daeschler**  
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Rachel Daeschler is Certification Director at EASA since January 2019. She joined the Agency in 2004 and has occupied several successive positions, starting as a large aeroplane project certification manager. In 2010 she took over the position of large aeroplane section manager, and in 2014 she was appointed head of the Safety Intelligence department and deputy to the Strategy and Safety Management Director. In 2018 she was seconded to ICAO Montréal as coordinator for Regional Safety Oversight Organisations. She is a graduated engineer from Ecole Polytechnique and Ecole Nationale de l'Aviation Civile (France) and has a specialized Master in aircraft airworthiness.

### Lee Moak

Company/Organization:

Intrepid  
CEO

Position/Function:

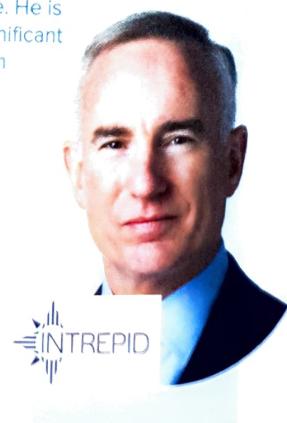
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Lee Moak is Founder and CEO of Intrepid, a full-service public affairs, advocacy, safety, and business consulting firm. He served as the Co-Chair of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Special Committee to Review the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Aircraft Certification Process and as a member of the FAA's Drone Advisory Committee. He has been president of the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) and Chairman of the Governance and Compensation Committee at the United States Postal Service. He is broadly recognized as a significant force for change in the realm of air transportation and international policy.



# Delivering the Future

**Presentation** 18 February, 09:45 AM–10:00 AM

## An update on current challenges and opportunities of UAS deliveries

It started with Amazon. In 2013, Jeff Bezos, for the first time, discussed the delivery of goods with small unmanned aerial systems. The starting point of a broad public discussion on delivery drones. But it took a while before the first UAS-based services came into action. And some even smaller companies have been faster than the logistic giant from Seattle – probably a little faster than Jeff Bezos expected. But now, there are also some regions with test cases for Amazon customers.

The MK30 underwent rigorous safety tests to ensure **it delivers double the range and half the noise** than any previous Amazon delivery drone.

Amazon has developed Prime Air as a safe and reliable delivery solution, providing convenient and fast drone delivery for its customers. The question is: When will Amazon start to deliver the future on a huge scale? The crucial prerequisite for deliveries in urban areas is a UAS for mid-range and publicly accepted operations. And the latest “Amazon drone” model



**prime air**  
**Alberto Nisoli**  
 Company/Organization:  
 Position/Function:  
 Website:  
 LinkedIn:

Alberto Nisoli is the European Leader of Amazon Prime Air. Alberto joined Amazon in 2015 in WW Operations Finance. After leading Finance teams supporting various Tech and Robotics programs, he is now responsible for Prime Air international expansion. Prior to joining Amazon, Alberto spent 19 years in the Chemical and Plastics industry working for General Electric and SABIC, where he held technical positions in Polycarbonate Process Technology before moving to operations and Finance roles of increasing responsibility. He received his Piano Diploma from the Conservatorio di Milano (Italy), Laurea in Chemical Engineering from Politecnico di Milano (Italy), a Master of Science and a PhD degree in Chemical Engineering from University of Massachusetts at Amherst (MA).

promises to be that thing. The MK30 received FAA approval to begin operations with customers. And - probably most important - the approval included the ability to fly beyond the Visual Line of Sight.

