#### Press Release

**Drones must be safe – says aviation industry***Brussels, 5 Sept 2016*

**As drones continue to take the world by a storm, key stakeholders are warning that the safety risks of drone operations may be seriously underestimated and deserve urgent attention. A Joint Statement, signed by the entire spectrum of manned aviation stakeholders – from pilots to airlines, helicopter operators to air traffic controllers – calls for “a robust harmonized EU-wide regulatory safety framework”. ECA, IATA, EHA, ACI EUROPE, ERAA, IACA, A4E, IFALPA, IFATCA and CANSO jointly ask for a number of measures to be taken, including mandatory drone registration, operator/drone pilot training & licensing, built-in performance limitations and robust oversight by the national aviation authority.**

“Drones are such an appealing technology that many of the drone users are tempted to use them to the limits – or even beyond,” says Dirk Polloczek, President of the European Cockpit Association. “That means to the technical, legal and safety limits. We’ve seen, for example, an increase in hacks and modifications in order to extend the drone’s flight distance. We’ve also seen drones flying around airports and runways – which are strict “no-drone zones” – and this despite warnings that this is prohibited and dangerous. And we’ve seen a [worrying increase in near-misses](https://www.eurocockpit.be/pages/remotely-piloted-aircraft-systems-drones#incidents and accidents) between manned and unmanned aircraft. Some drone operators are moving on a thin ice, and this could harm our entire industry and its safety record. So, Europe needs to act with a strong legal framework and effective enforcement.”

As Europe’s regulator is working on the rules right now, drone operations are already taking place, as do incidents and near misses between aircraft and drones. This is why the aviation stakeholders are calling for an extensive awareness raising campaign. “Some drone users don’t care about the legal and safety aspects of operating drones, while others are simply unaware of what might happen if they fly e.g. too high, or too close to an aircraft. This is why – as a first step – we need to make sure everyone – commercial or recreational drone operator – is aware what the safety risks are and how to avoid them,” says Johan Glanz, ECA Board Director.

In addition, the Joint Statement calls for:

* **Compulsory registration of all drones at time of purchase or resale: This allows** the owner/pilot to be traced, and will encourage compliance with rules & regulations.
* **Mandatory training and a certificate/license for drone pilots**,depending on the properties and performance of the drone and the nature of operations. This would enhance knowledge of the regulations and restrictions and help to develop necessary skills.
* **Built-in Technical Performance Limitations** such asgeo-fencing and altitude / distance restrictions, to reduce the safety risks concerning critical airspace, terrain, and buildings.
* **In-depth research into the impact of collisions** between drones, incl. smaller ones, and manned aircraft.
* **Integration of recreational drones into national Model Aircraft Flying Regulations,** applyingthesame high safety standards for recreational users.
* **Increase in the effectiveness of rule enforcement** by national authorities, including training and technical equipment for their staff to be able to monitor and ensure compliance.

\*\*\*

**For further information, please contact**:

Dirk Polloczek, ECA President, Tel: +32 2 705 32 93

Johan Glanz, ECA Technical Board Director, Tel: +32 2 705 32 93

*Note to editors: ECA is the representative body of European pilot associations, representing over 38.000 pilots from across Europe. Website:* [*www.eurocockpit.be*](http://www.eurocockpit.be)