



EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY

Brussels, 14 May 2007

BACKGROUND ON NEW EDA INITIATIVE ON UAVs

Unmanned Air Vehicle systems are an important 'breakthrough technology' which can contribute significantly to meeting the objectives of ESDP operations. A range of aviation companies and research institutes are now investing in the development of UAVs and their related technologies. However, these efforts have been fragmented, with many projects spread across many European countries. The initiative launched today -- the result of extensive consultation between the Agency, the European Commission and the Aerospace and Defence Industries Association of Europe (ASD) -- aims to establish a joint and complementary co-operation agenda.

The main target of the joint agenda is to address the challenge of enabling UAVs to operate alongside conventional air traffic. This is the key to expanding the use of UAVs beyond the purely military into the security and ultimately commercial domains and to creating the scale of demand around which European industry can unite. Starting with an EDA-funded roadmap study, the proposed approach aims at progression from the current state of affairs, in which military UAVs can fly in segregated airspace, to a situation in which civilian and government-operated UAVs could operate alongside other manned aircraft in integrated airspace by 2012. This will require innovative technology development and system demonstrations for UAVs to be considered fully airworthy and for the right regulatory framework to be in place for this integration.

The initial study for a more detailed road-map has a budget of some €500,000. The Agency will work with participating Member States, the Commission and industry on ideas for joint financing and an organisational model for future phases of this initiative.

Working together on these issues at a European level can help to generate coherent projects for both security-oriented and commercial UAVs, as well as addressing their military use. This approach will also encourage the development of multi-purpose technologies, supported by budgets of the

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Commission as well as investment by industry. It will reduce fragmentation and duplication of UAV components which civil and military applications have in common. It has the potential, if properly exploited by all stakeholders, to move Europe quickly to a leadership position in a field which is of prime importance for European armed forces and the European aerospace industry alike.

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