



**THIRTY-NINTH PLENARY (TRIENNIAL) SESSION**

(Videoconference, 12 July 2021)

**Agenda item 4:                   Presentation of the Focal Point reports**

**REPORT ON ECAC ACTIVITIES ON UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (UAS)**

(Presented by Raúl Medina Caballero, ECAC Focal Point for UAS)

**SUMMARY**

This paper presents the report of activities in 2019-2021 on Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). This domain was incorporated in the ECAC Work Programme for the first time in 2019.

**ACTION TO BE TAKEN**

The Plenary Session is invited to note the main achievements on UAS matters for the period 2019-2021.

## Introduction

1. The 2019-2021 Work Programme included for the first time a new work stream on UAS (formerly Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS)). It was underlined that all aspects of unmanned aviation should be reflected in the work programme, while it should not lead to duplication of activities with other organisations, and ECAC should only act where it can contribute to the discussion.

2. The work in ECAC thus aims at the promotion and harmonised development of the UAS future in Europe at a strategic level. The establishment of the domain and activities are led by the ECAC Focal Point on UAS, since 2019 Mr Raúl Medina Caballero (DGCA Spain), with support from the ECAC Secretariat.

## Implementation of the 2019-2021 Work Programme

3. The 2019-2021 Work Programme includes the key objectives to promote strategic debates on the UAS future by Member States and to support the sharing of experiences and national policies and practices among ECAC Member States.

4. The main aim is to promote the development of UAS as a strategic sector supporting broader economic growth and innovation. To be effective, this will need to be in the context of a regulatory framework that supports this growth while managing safety, security, environmental and other aspects. Especially in the early stages of the development of the sector, there will be different speeds of growth and variation in the initiatives to support and regulate the sector. For this reason, one of the main objectives of ECAC's UAS agenda is to promote an exchange of high-level perspectives on possible UAS developments in order to meet the challenges facing the sector.

5. In line with the work programme, ECAC focused its efforts on completing the assigned objectives and has implemented the following actions:

- **A new public site has been created on the ECAC website** providing information on the UAS activities.
- **Web platform for exchanging data and information on UAS:** a restricted access site has been created for which Member States have been asked to provide national points of contact in charge of UAS matters. The site allows the contact points to access information, such as on UAS-related events, presentations and national strategies.
- **Survey on national policies and practices:** the survey was launched among ECAC Member States in August 2019. The results and analysis were published in a strategic report in April 2020 and shared with ECAC Member States, showing that the priorities lay with U-Space Implementation, Urban Air Mobility (UAM), Counter-drone systems and Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations. An executive summary is available on ECAC's public website.
- ECAC continues to work on the topics identified in the April 2020 strategic report mentioned above and to foster the exchange of latest developments on UAS and all its aspects within its Member States, in particular through the network of national contact points. The presentation and content of the ECAC secure site is continually re-evaluated, to include the best content to support Member States' strategic decision-making processes.
- **UAS experts' contribution to ECAC Security Forum (SF/27, 28-29 May 2019):** the objective was to exchange views on recent incidents involving UAS and the

protection of airports from UAS attacks. The presentations were also made available on the secure website to the network of national contact points. Specific guidance material on the security aspects of UAS was developed by the Guidance Material Task Force, and adopted by the Security Programme Management Group in 2020.

- **Contacts with key partners:** International outreach activities have been undertaken with Partner States and regional/international organisations, aimed at promoting the mutual understanding of UAS issues and encouraging exchanges of information on the latest regulatory developments. To this end, meetings were held with Israel, China and others in the margins of the 40<sup>th</sup> session of the ICAO Assembly (Montreal, 24 September – 4 October 2019), UAS matters have also been addressed at the regular exchanges between the ECAC Coordinating Committee and the United States government. At the meetings, the partners exchanged information and views on the latest regulatory developments, for example the Regulation (EU) 2019/947 and the approval of the new European framework for the U-Space and developments around Urban Air Mobility (UAM). Topics also included acceptance and expectations by the public, as well as environmental matters (e.g. noise) and airspace integration.
- **Exchange of information:** As various initiatives are already being launched by many Member States on emerging and important issues regarding implementation, ECAC has strengthened its efforts on information exchange. In support of this, the first edition of a new UAS bulletin was launched in May 2021, including information on the new European framework, the U-space concept and Urban Air Mobility, as well as updates from ECAC and non-ECAC States (e.g. China, United States). The next edition is planned to be issued in the second half of 2021. In addition, the ECAC News #73 summer 2021 edition was dedicated to UAS.

#### **Action to be taken**

6. The Plenary Session is invited to note the main achievements on UAS matters for the period 2019-2021.

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