
Armed drones on the European media

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• Echo24, Czech Republic
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• Financial Times, United Kingdom
• iRozhlas, Czech Republic
• L'Express, France

• Observador, Portugal
• Swiss Info, Switzerland
• The Independent, United Kingdom

DRONE ANARCHY IN THE UK

Does the UK have adequate laws and technology on drones?

21 Dec 2018

Sylvia Pfeifer and Martin Coulter, Financial Times, United Kingdom

The travel disruption at Gatwick airport has renewed calls for the UK to reassess its regulatory regime as well as what technologies the country should be investing in to spot and eliminate the threat of an unmanned aerial vehicle in seconds.

► <https://www.ft.com/content/b57bda04-0532-11e9-99df-6183d3002ee1>

Gatwick airport drones: what military technology are they using to allow planes to fly?

21 Dec 2018

Anthony Cuthbertson, The Independent, United Kingdom

The Gatwick airport was reopened with a range of protection and surveillance measures put in place to prevent further chaos. No more details have been revealed by the airport or the authorities, but military and drone experts are able to give an idea of the kind of technology available to law enforcement and airport security services: radar, signal jammers, nets and lasers.

► <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/drones-gatwick-airport-defence-radar-nets-signal-jammer-lasers-military-a8694926.html>

Are drone laws going to change after the Gatwick incident?

21 Dec 2018

Joe Watts, The Independent, United Kingdom

Drones have been a growing menace in recent years with the number of close shaves involving planes increasing. The Independent answers to five questions about drones and security in the UK, clarifying what the police can do to stop future attacks.

► <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/drone-laws-gatwick-delays-grayling-a8694591.html>

Spain should learn from the Gatwick chaos

28 Dec 2018

El País, Spain

The Gatwick incident has highlighted the vulnerability of strategic facilities such as airports, nuclear power plants and other infrastructures facing the threat of malicious use of unmanned aircrafts. The main question is how to detect this type of devices and how to neutralize them without risks for third parties. Radar systems and frequency interference techniques can detect drones interrupt the contact between the device and its operator.

► https://elpais.com/elpais/2018/12/27/opinion/1545950266_681294.html

THE EUROPEAN DRONE

New generation of FlyEye systems for Polish territorial defence

3 Dec 2018

Rafał Lesiecki, Defence24, Poland

On 3 December, the Armament Inspectorate of the Polish Ministry of Defence signed an agreement with the WB Electronics company. It concerns delivery of three sets of FlyEye short-range mini-UAVs (four platforms in each set), worth EUR 2.5m. The agreement also covers optional procurement of 9 additional sets. The UAVs will be received by the Polish Territorial Defence Force.

► <https://www.defence24.pl/nowa-generacja-flyeye-dla-wot-umowa-podpisana>

Another step forward: first Eurodrone flight in 5 years

17 Dec 2018

Defence24, Poland

The definition stage of the European MALE RPAS drone is completed. The first take-off of the UAV, commonly called Eurodrone, is planned for 2023 and the first delivery of armed models should take place in 2025. The project is managed by the European organisation OCCAR (Organisation Conjointe de Coopération en Matière d'Armement) dealing with common military-equipment purchase. Airbus and Dassault are involved in the project. The MALE RPAS drone will be larger than the MQ-9 Reaper but the shape of its hull will be similar. It will include two engines on the wings for thrust. There will be a possibility to arm it with bombs and guided missiles.

► <https://www.defence24.pl/kolejny-krok-naprzod-eurodrona-pierwszy-lot-za-5-lat>

Polish Ministry of Defense buys micro UAVs

13 Dec 2018

Aviation24, Poland

The Polish Ministry of Defence has decided to buy six sets of “dragonflies” – drones that are four times smaller than the tiniest drones that the Polish army now owns. Their maximum weight should be 1.6 kg. They will reach an altitude of 2000 m. They should be equipped with optoelectronic heads enabling reconnaissance during both day and night. Other criteria: distance between the operator and the drone should be able to exceed 1200 m and the UAV should be able to spend over 30 minutes in the air. Different producers will present their offers in January 2019.

► <http://aviation24.pl/index.php/component/k2/item/5121-musza-byc-cztery-razy-lzejsze-niz-najmniejszy-dron-w-polskiej-armii-mon-kupuje-wazki-bezzalogowce-klasy-mikro>

A special relationship: The US military and Swiss universities

6 Dec 2018

Anand Chandrasekhar, Swiss Info, Switzerland

From aerial surveillance cameras to autonomous reconnaissance drones: Swiss universities are participating in projects funded by the US military. Among these projects

there is the first gigapixel (one billion pixels) surveillance camera project (ARGUS-IS) developed by the Us Army. Meant to be mounted on drones, the cameras could scan an area half the size of Manhattan and track moving vehicles and people. It was first tested in 2010 and operationalised in 2014.

- ▶ https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/sensitive-research_a-special-relationship--the-us-military-and-swiss-universities/44591246

Czech army drones made 3000 flight hours in Afghanistan

26 Dec 2018

Echo24, Czech Republic

ScanEagle reconnaissance drones used by the Czech military in Afghanistan have already made 3000 flight hours. Drones donated by the United States help patrolling the Allied forces Bagram Air Base by providing real-time information on potential hostile activity in the vicinity of the base. Drones are equipped with thermovision and 36:1 optical zoom. Between 2022 and 2024 the military is to acquire multi-purpose drones that could be mounted with weaponry.

- ▶ <https://www.echo24.cz/a/SV7B2/drony-ceske-armady-naletaly-v-afghanistanu-3-tisice-hodin-strezi-zakladnu-bagram>

The Czech radiolocator Vera would be able to protect airports from drones. But it's a military system

28 Dec 2018

Eva Kézrová, iRozhlas, Czech Republic

Recent Gatwick airport drone incident showed that small sized drones present a big threat to airport security. While civilian radars are not able to detect objects smaller than one square meter, passive radiolocators like Czech-made Vera work on a different principle. Rather than detecting a reflective surface of aerial vehicles, radiolocator monitors all devices emitting signals from 1 to 18 GHz and thus are able to detect even the smallest drones. The problem is that apart from a high price, it is not a civilian but military system designed for aerial defense and electronic warfare.

- ▶ https://www.irozhlas.cz/veda-technologie/technologie/radiolokator-vera-drony-letiste_1812281301_pj

AGAINST THE DRONES

Expert: Drone bought in Denmark can be used to kill

3 Dec 2018

Jakob Skaaning, DR Nyheder, Denmark

Five Danes were charged for buying drones and drone parts for Islamic State. They deny the charges. The type of drone in question can be bought from hobby shops and fitted with computer parts and programmed to bypass regulatory restrictions. The drone they bought was the same type (Skyhunter) that killed 2 Kurdish and injured 2 French soldiers in Iraq, October 2016. Drones are a big threat for Iraqi forces, who have no means of counteraction. Terror organisations use drones for surveillance, but few examples exist of drones used to carry bombs.

► <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/ekspert-drone-koebt-i-danmark-kan-bruges-til-draebe>

The threat of lethal autonomous weapons

14 Dec 2018

Sébastien Julian, L'Express, France

We don't know yet how dangerous Lethal autonomous weapons systems (Laws) could be, but we know for sure that many country (China and the Us in particular) are developing this kind of weapons, and many analysts are concerned. There is debate about how to define autonomous weapons but, to all intents and purposes, they are devices that can identify, track and attack a target without human intervention. The key element of an autonomous weapon is that once activated – switched on, if you like – it makes the decision itself about whether to attack a target, which may or may not be a human.

► https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/sciences/robots-soldats-programmes-pour-tuer_2053049.html

European Defence Fund could be breaching European treaties

10 Dec 2018

Markus Becker, Der Spiegel, Germany

The European defense fund was established in 2017 in an effort to move towards an integrated European security and defence policy (among the the new projects there is the development of the Euro drone). But the fund could be illegal. According to Andreas Fischer-Lescano of the University of Bremen, who drafted a legal study commissioned by the Left party in the European Parliament, the Lisbon Treaty explicitly prohibits the financing of military or defence projects from the European Union's common budget.

► <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/ruestung-eu-verteidigungsfonds-laut-gutachten-illegal-a-1242792.html>

German armed forces developing electric bazooka against drones

19 Dec 2018

Gerhard Heumann, Die Welt, Germany

The German Army wants to buy “shoulder-mounted jammers” to neutralize drones.

These devices should be able to block remote control communications. The biggest challenge for security experts is the possibility of detecting small drones that hard to spot. They are also looking for a system capable of “increasing the protection of soldiers”.

▶ <https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article185738042/Neue-Waffen-Bundeswehr-setzt-gegen-Drohnen-auf-E-Panzerfaust.html>

CHINA IS THE KING OF DRONE SALES

China is driving use of armed drones in Middle East

17 Dec 2018

Observador, Portugal

The use of armed drones in the Middle East, driven largely by sales from China, has grown significantly in the past few years, with an increasing number of countries and other parties using them in regional conflicts, according to a new report. China was able to win contracts in the Middle East and elsewhere by offering drones at lower prices than the United States. The report explored where and how each of the states have used their armed drones and whether they have changed the way these countries approach air power.

► <https://www.apnews.com/56cfdc2ab6224891a264fc88f70200c8>