



A COLLABORATION ON DRONE INNOVATIONS - AIRBALTIC AND LMT

News / Airlines



Latvian national airline airBaltic and Latvian mobile telecommunications operator LMT have signed an agreement for collaboration within the drone industry. The agreement foresees a joint development of various drone solutions overseen by general aviation and the development of LMT's learning program for drone pilots. Both companies will also collaborate on testing the mobile network coverage in the air space.

Fast-paced global digital transformation signifies the necessity for new products and solutions that enable a full-fledged use of technological advantages such as drones and mobile communications. Parcel delivery, territory surveillance and inspection, urgent transfer of medication or donor organs – are just a few future scenarios for drones and UAVs driving the industry towards development.

Despite drone flights Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) not being common due to a lack of legal regulations, it's estimated that in the future, 70% of all commercial drone operations will be held BVLOS.

Ingmaris Pētis, Vice President of LMT, comments on the topic: “We're eagerly working to turn drone flights BVLOS and autonomous drone operations into a common reality. An

uninterrupted connection with the drone throughout its flight is crucial for conducting a safe unmanned flight BVLOS. Such connectivity can be provided by a reliable mobile network combined with a drone management program and a control center solution that enables drone pilot operations during the flight BVLOS”.

It's vital that as technologies develop, the use of unmanned aerial vehicles becomes easier to access and more common. Cellular network connectivity improves the safety of drone flights BVLOS, provides more possibilities for operating flights remotely, and enables using several drones in a synchronized flight.

General Manager at airBaltic Training Kristaps Lapsa indicates that both the usage of drone solutions in various industries and the number of drone users are growing. And it's essential for airBaltic as an airline that this tendency is highly beneficial for Latvia's society and the country in general. K. Lapsa also expresses airBaltic's satisfaction that through cooperation with qualified innovation experts, the airline will have opportunities to create innovative solutions in the drones and UAVs industry and provide conversant pilots ready to teach drone pilotage.

The collaboration of airBaltic and LMT is significant from the industry innovations' perspective and is an outstanding example of a long-term approach in development despite various limitations caused by the global Covid-19 pandemic. T?lis Linkaits, Minister for Transport of the Republic of Latvia, comments: “It's remarkable how the leading Latvian companies of aviation and telecommunication industries manage to keep such a strategic vision and innovative outlook amid the global pandemic. It is important that, as the economy recovers, companies are prepared to move forward with innovative solutions and further development.”

To emerge drone innovations in Latvia, LMT, alongside partners from other countries, participates in the COMP4DRONES project, aiming to develop Europe's UAV ecosystem. Additionally, LMT is a GUTMA member and an active member of the GSMA drone working group.

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