



DUFOUR AEROSPACE PARTNERS WITH AIR ZERMATT TO PIONEER DRONE USE FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

News / Manufacturer



Dufour Aerospace announced a new collaboration with Air Zermatt, a globally recognized leader in rescue operations. The partnership aims to explore the use of drones in improving emergency services, particularly in the rugged mountain terrain of the Valais region.

"A pioneering spirit is at the core of Air Zermatt. We are constantly working to improve performance for our patients and customers and reduce our ecological footprint. Drones are a key part of this, and Dufour Aerospace supports our goals perfectly," says Daniel Aufdenblatten, CEO of Air Zermatt.

?Exploring various drone scenarios

In a three-year program, Dufour Aerospace and Air Zermatt will analyze and test various scenarios for the use of drones in rescue operations. The overarching aim is to improve the supply security for the population of Valais. Daniel Aufdenblatten, CEO of Air Zermatt stated: “We are directly impacted when, for example, road or rail connections are disrupted, as was the case last summer in the Matter and Saastal valleys. In such situations, drones make perfect sense when transporting essential goods like medications. Drones equipped with sensors for terrain analysis are also valuable. We want to start developing the drone applications of tomorrow.”

?Unlocking the enormous potential of drones

Sascha Hardegger, CEO of Dufour Aerospace commented: “With Air Zermatt, we’ve found a partner who understands the vast potential of drones combined with deep mountain aviation experience. We complement each other perfectly. It’s not about what drones are doing today. Rather we are interested in how drones can be used beneficially over long distances and for extended periods. A hundred years ago, no one could have imagined how important commercial aviation would become. The same applies to drones—we are really only at the beginning of a massive development, and the potential is huge.”

?Shared vision and values

Dufour Aerospace and Air Zermatt share many common values. Both companies are based in the Valais region, and Thomas Pfammatter, one of Dufour Aerospace’s founders, continues to work as a helicopter pilot for Air Zermatt. However, there is a greater reason for this collaboration. “Of course, we know Dufour Aerospace and have followed their drone development progress for some time. More importantly, we share the same vision—the population in the mountains is close to our hearts. And, of course, we see great commercial potential in drone use,” says Aufdenblatten.

?Looking ahead

So, what’s next? “We started this project with the analysis of relatively broad scenarios. We’ll begin with simple tests and gradually move toward more complex applications. We need to consult the population and many partners and stakeholders, and we need to work with the authorities to find suitable ways of authorizing both the tests and, ultimately, the regular operation of drones,” says Hardegger.

?Tilt-wing drone technology and helicopter integration

As part of the joint tests, Dufour Aerospace will also examine how helicopters and drones can be used together without posing a risk to each other. Other airspace users, such as airplanes and paragliders, will also be examined. The collaboration with Air Zermatt places high demands on Dufour Aerospace’s tilt-wing drones. “The altitude of Zermatt and the surrounding terrain present a challenge. But it is in these boundary conditions that real progress is made, which is why these tests make a lot of sense to us. Safety is the highest priority for all involved,” says Hardegger.

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17 DECEMBER 2024

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