EMFU
EUROPEAN MODEL FLYING UNION

Representing Model Flyers in Europe

Update on Model Flying

EAS Conference

23 & 24 March 2024

Model Flying

- The largest Air Sport with > 500K participants in Europe
- “Kindergarten” to “retirement home” and “everything in between” – an important rung on the aviation ladder
- An excellent safety record established over a century
- Historically had a low threshold for participation
- Historically subject to ‘light touch’ Member State regulation
- Increasing challenges & threats in a changing world

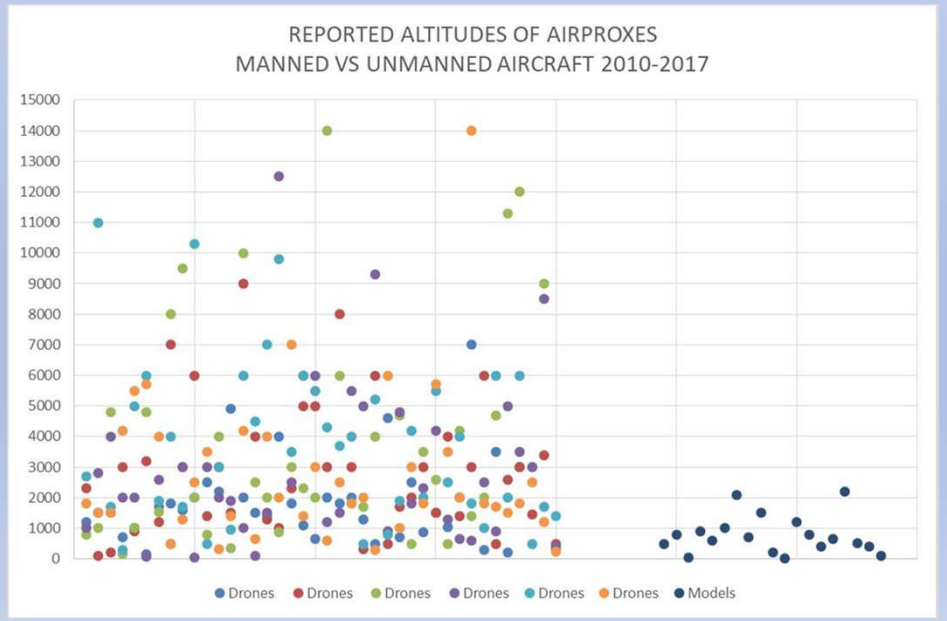
The Value of Model Flying

Strong economic and security case for supporting a thriving model aircraft community:

- Important “first contact” and aviation STEM activity for youth
- Role in development and deployment of new aviation-related technologies:
  - First in electrification:
    - Development of outrunner motors
    - Large-scale deployment of new battery technologies
  - First in use of new composite materials (carbon)
- War in Ukraine has shown importance of model aircraft pilots and Europe-based production:
  - Model aircraft pilots central pillar of Ukraine’s drone programme
  - Multiple model aircraft and related technology producers expanding/switching to military drone production
- Above all: it’s fun!

What Changed

- The proliferation of other unmanned aircraft – primarily multi-rotor drones
- Consumers (rather than ‘aviators’) provided with aircraft with far too much capability – too easy to break the law
- Lots of reported conflicts with other airspace users, including CAT
- Security concerns arising from nefarious use and weaponisation
- Recognition by politicians of the potential economic value of drones



Increased Regulation

- EASA commenced regulatory process for unmanned aircraft in 2016
- Strong negative response to EASA proposals from model flying community
- Support for model flyers from EAS and FAI
- EAS achieved recognition for model flying in the Basic Regulation
- Regulations referred to an Expert Group which included EAS & FAI
- EMFU formed to co-ordinate efforts of the model flying community

Increased Regulation

- EU Regulation published in 2019 (947/2019)
- Included three mechanisms to facilitate model flying – the most important being Article 16 for “operations in the framework of Clubs and Associations”.
- The only requirement mandated is the requirement for operator registration
- In practical terms, many flyers can continue ‘as they were’ other than the requirement to register as an ‘Operator’ (usually for a fee) with their NAA
- But….

Problems arising from Regulation

- Large regulatory burden on volunteer community to retain existing rights
- Regulation disproportionate to the risk
- Inconsistent/incorrect interpretation and implementation in Members States
- EMFU was commissioned by EASA to write a guide on the implementation of Article 16 for the benefit of NAA's and Model Flyers – still unpublished
- Model flying community constantly battling with regulators to ensure any new requirements for drones are not imposed on them by default

➡ Regulation raises the threshold for participation = reduced participation

EMFU Regulatory Objectives

- Explore possibility for greater recognition/derogation for model flying when EU Basic Regulation is reviewed: not automatically treated as “drones” and having to fight for exemptions

- Propose amendments to existing regulations to clarify the intent of Article 16 to reduce misinterpretation by NAAs (separate category for Article 16)

- Propose some detail amendments to clarify age requirements and requirements for sailplanes

Other Challenges

- EU initiatives on Security and Drones
- Remote I.D. – Driven by security concerns over drones
- Electronic Conspicuity – driven by integration of BVLOS drones
- U-Space - ‘exempted’ in EU regs, but not really
- Environmental challenges – Impact of EC Habitats Directive and implementation of Natura2000/biodiversity rules in Member States
- Retaining participation - ageing and declining membership/lack of young/diverse participants

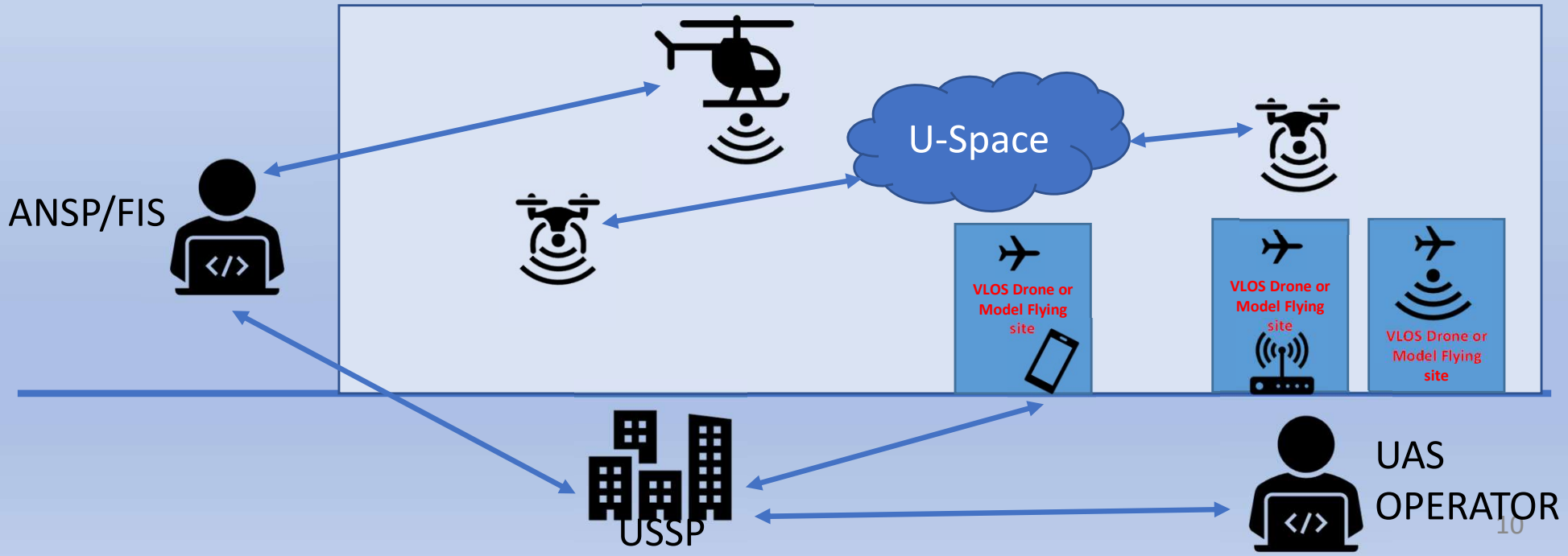
Remote I.D & Electronic Conspicuity

- Model flying mostly operates from a fixed point
- It relies on VLOS and good situational awareness, generally in open rural locations
- There is no history of any significant conflict with other airspace users (BVLOS UAS potentially more of a challenge)
- There is no history of any significant security issues arising from our members so R.I.D. is unnecessary/disproportionate

Electronic Conspicuity for Model Flying

Model flyers could make their location electronically conspicuous in one of three ways:

1. Ground based notification of operations to USSP
2. Ground based broadcast system to alert other airspace users to model flying within a defined airspace volume
3. On-board conspicuity devices

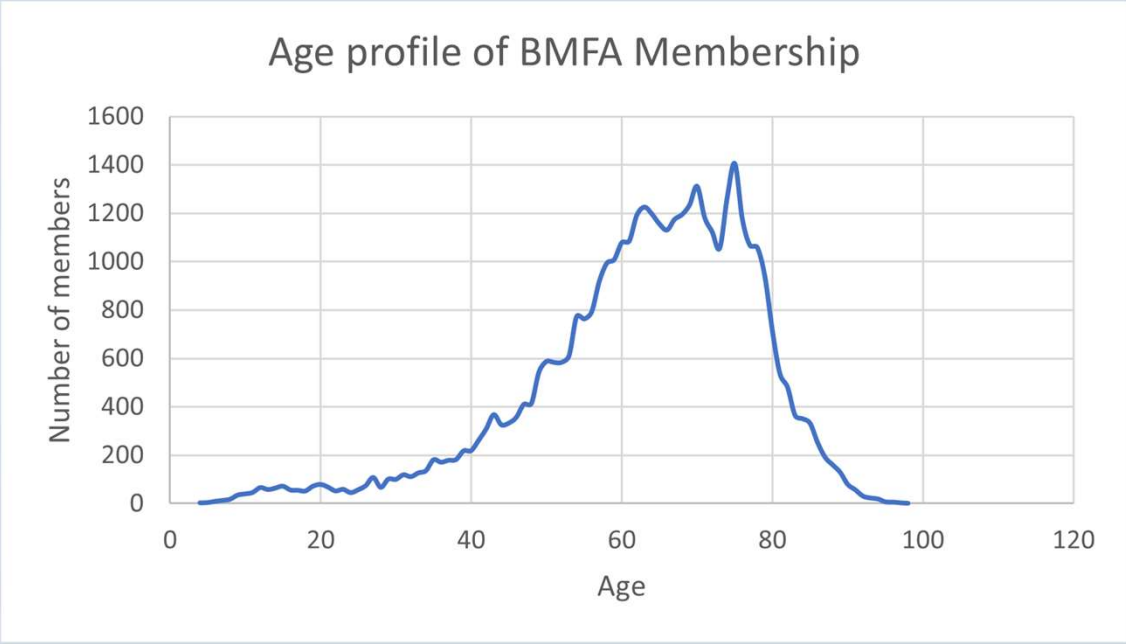


Environmental & Planning Challenges

- Increasing threat to flying sites arising from wildlife protection including EC Habitats Directive and implementation of Natura 2000
- Assertive wildlife/nature organisations – difficult to challenge
- Increased sensitivity neighbours due to privacy/safety concerns as a result of emergence of “drones”
- Issues arising from noise regulation
- Threat from NIMBY neighbours

Maintaining Participation

- Ageing membership – predominantly older men
- Regulation raises threshold for participation = reduced participation
- Uncertainty also generates ‘unrest’ and reduces participation
- Perhaps more people operating ‘under the radar’ free from regulation
- Not enough younger/diverse members



Thanks for listening