Legal regulation of unmanned aircraft

Abstract

This thesis deals with the legal regulation of drones with emphasis on the European legal framework and the administrative practice of the Civil Aviation Authority. The aim of the thesis is to provide an explanation of the different terms such as unmanned aircraft and unmanned system, to define the different classes of unmanned systems and to categorize the different types of operation.

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the history and allows to interpret the current legislation in the light of its development. The second chapter describes the three-level legal framework, which consists of international law, European Union law and national law. In this chapter I focus on the international organizations operating in the civil aviation sector and their common objectives. The third chapter details the basic concepts of unmanned aviation and compares their definitions in different documents. The fourth chapter focuses on the production, marketing and classes of unmanned systems. It also discusses the obligations of manufacturers, importers and distributors of unmanned systems. The fifth chapter discusses the operation of unmanned systems and the categorisation of different operations with an emphasis on their comparison. In particular, the focus is on the open and specific category. In the sixth chapter the airspace of the Czech Republic is defined and the tool of delineation of geographical zones by the European Union's member states is discussed. Chapter seven discusses the European Union's plan to introduce the U-space concept to allow for risky operations of unmanned systems. The last chapter contains a summary of an interview with the Head of the Unmanned Systems Division of the Civil Aviation Authority, Ing. Petr Plaček. The interview covers an assessment of the quality of the European legal framework, the administrative activities of the Civil Aviation Authority, the audit activities of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency and recent cases of breaches of the rules for the operation of unmanned systems.

Keywords: unmanned aircraft, unmanned systems, drone