EHA

European Helicopter Association

Newsletter

3 September 2026

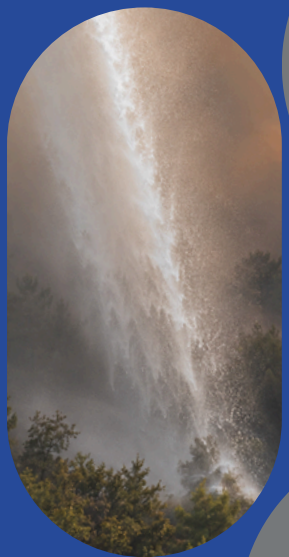


In this week's news...

- **Summer consultations test meaningful engagement:** The EHA has responded to three important European initiatives despite compressed summer timelines that have limited opportunities for full member consultation.
- **DNSH – proportionality matters:** The EHA supports simplification but is pressing for rotorcraft-specific treatment of emergency services, specialist infrastructure and aircraft where ICAO CO_2 standards do not apply.
- **Drone Strategy 2.0 – integration, not displacement:** Europe's rapidly developing drone ecosystem must not fragment airspace or constrain established HEMS and other safety-critical helicopter operations.
- **EPAS 2027 – recognition must become action:** EHA welcomes IIMC becoming a Top Safety Topic but wants better rotorcraft exposure data, stronger action on obstacles, UAS and GNSS interference, and genuinely proportionate regulation and training.
- **HEMS access already being affected:** Reports from Strasbourg of illegal drone activity preventing night helicopter transfers demonstrate that this is no longer a theoretical future risk.
- **Helicopters and European resilience:** Wildfires again demonstrate Europe's dependence on rapidly deployable rotorcraft. Brussels cannot rely upon helicopters for climate resilience and emergency response while simultaneously treating aviation principally as an environmental externality.



The common thread: European policy must recognise helicopters not simply as aviation activity to be regulated, but as essential infrastructure supporting safety, healthcare, resilience and society.



EASA & Regulatory Matters

In other news

Association news

Forthcoming events

EASA & Regulatory Matters

Read the latest regulatory tracker version here

EASA and EC Consultations

We are always a little wary of consultations taking place over the European summer, not least because it makes it difficulty to consult with our members, to ensure the majority view is represented, together with any dissenting voices where appropriate. Unfortunately, a couple of responses have had to be submitted without consultation, due to short turnaround times or late notification of the topic concerned:

EC Consultation on Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) Regulatory Principles

In short, the EHA supports the proposed simplified DNSH framework but seeks rotorcraft-specific clarification. ICAO CO_2 criteria should apply only where relevant standards exist; emergency-service exemptions should reflect aircraft use, not configuration; and heliports and specialist infrastructure require proportionate treatment. DNSH should support fleet renewal, innovation and public-interest operations without disproportionate burdens. DNSH Consultation - EHA Response

Review of Implementation of EC Drone Strategy 2.0

The EU's Drone Strategy 2.0 envisages drones and Innovative Air Mobility becoming mainstream by 2030. The challenge for conventional aviation is ensuring that U-space integration, new entrants and accelerated regulation do not fragment airspace or disadvantage existing operators, while exploiting shared technology, infrastructure and civil-defence investment opportunities. EC Drone 2.0 - EHA Response

Review of Draft EPAS 2027

The EHA broadly welcomes the reshaped EPAS 2027, particularly its clearer structure, recognition of inadvertent IMC as a Top Safety Topic and focus on reducing administrative burden for small helicopter operators. However, EHA considers that rotorcraft risks remain insufficiently translated into practical, measurable actions. Priorities include better European flying-hour and activity data, stronger action on obstacle clearance and UAS conflict, rotorcraft-specific responses to GNSS interference, and proportionate modernisation of training and FSTD requirements. EHA also recommends preserving clear traceability of rotorcraft actions from EPAS 2026, ensuring that restructuring does not dilute existing safety priorities or the distinctive needs of mission-driven operations. Draft EPAS 2027 - EHA Response

In other news

Helicopter Firefighting – A Global Mission

EASA has highlighted the vital contribution of helicopters to aerial firefighting, protecting communities, property and ecosystems while helping limit wildfire-related emissions. The article draws attention to NASA's free FIRMS platform, which uses satellite observations to provide near-real-time global fire and thermal-anomaly data. Its interactive mapping demonstrates that wildfire is far from a regional problem, with significant activity across Africa, the Americas, Australia and Southeast Asia, reinforcing the continuing importance of capable, coordinated aerial firefighting resources worldwide. NASA FIRMS Homepage







Association news

Drone Proliferation: Protecting HEMS Operations Must Be a Priority

The French Helicopter Association (UFH) has warned that uncontrolled drone activity is no longer simply an emerging aviation-safety concern but is already degrading HEMS capability. At Strasbourg's Hautepierre Hospital, persistent illegal drone flights linked to a neighbouring prison have reportedly prevented night-time helicopter patient transfers, potentially increasing response times and adversely affecting patient outcomes.

The case highlights a wider European challenge. U-space implementation remains fragmented between Member States, while enforcement against non-compliant drone operations is inconsistent and reliable Europe-wide data are lacking. For the EHA, the issue reinforces the need for European U-space policy to recognise the unique requirements of HEMS and other priority crewed aviation. Regulation, enforcement and technology must ensure that essential helicopter operations retain safe and reliable access to hospitals and other critical infrastructure. Integration cannot mean displacement: Europe's developing drone ecosystem must accommodate, rather than constrain, life-saving aviation.

Spotlight: EHA Chairman Fredrik Kämpfe's visit to VAI strengthened transatlantic cooperation and reaffirmed the partners' commitment to EUROPEAN ROTORS through 2032. Read more.

Brussels news

European Helicopters: Essential in Crisis, Constrained in Policy

As Europe confronts another severe wildfire season, helicopters are once again providing the capability governments turn to when communities, infrastructure and ecosystems are threatened. In August, helicopters from the Netherlands, Norway and Germany joined rescEU aircraft supporting Belgium, while European resources responded elsewhere. By the end of July, the area burned was already around 2.5 times the usual level.

There is a growing contradiction in European policy. Brussels increasingly measures aviation through emissions, noise and environmental externalities, while giving far less weight to the societal value aviation creates. Yet when floods, fires, medical emergencies or other crises occur, policymakers rely on precisely the speed, flexibility and infrastructure-independent capability that helicopters uniquely provide.

Decarbonisation is essential, but policy that progressively increases the cost or complexity of maintaining specialist aviation capability risks becoming self-defeating. Europe cannot simultaneously depend upon helicopters as an instrument of climate resilience while regulating them as though their principal contribution were an environmental problem. Public-value aviation needs to be recognised - and protected - as part of Europe's resilience infrastructure.

Forthcoming events

EASA Artificial Intelligence Days 2026 Sept. 9-10, EASA HQ, Cologne	**AirMed World Congress** Sept. 16-18, Munich	**Part-IS Implementation Workshop 2026** Oct.7-8, EASA HQ,Cologne
BHA Safety Day Oct. 8, Cranfield, UK	**Innovative Air Mobility Implementation Forum** Oct. 27-28, EASA HQ, Cologne	**EUROPEAN ROTORS** Nov. 30 – Dec. 3, 2026, Lyon, France





