Thales expands Drones management for a safer airspace respecting privacy and quality of life

- Thales and Venture Capital funded start-up Airspace Link are partnering to integrate ground risk data from state and local governments, such as the location of schools, power lines and fireworks displays, with air risk data from air traffic control systems, enabling communities to manage the safe use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) into their airspace, while respecting privacy and quality of life.

- Airspace Link complements Thales’ expertise in airspace management and systems integration with the geospatial intelligence to support operations where a UAS is out of an operator’s visual range.

- Thales has also become a minority investor with Airspace Link to continue to innovate in the evolving area of UAS traffic management.

Thales and geospatial information management company Airspace Link will provide safe integration of UAS, commonly known as drones, into low altitude airspace where the systems are Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) of operators. With aviation, community and topographical data for the most accurate situational awareness, UAS operators can quickly and easily file for and receive flight plan authorization.

"We envision a future where manned and unmanned aviation operate together seamlessly," said Jean Ferré, Vice President, Airspace Mobility Solutions, Thales. “Thales’ investment and partnership with Airspace Link is an important step toward this reality."

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) forecasts that by 2024, commercial UAS operations will grow 60% – from approximately 500,000 to more than 800,000. Globally, analysts project UAS market to reach 2.91 million systems by 2023. To support the air traffic management challenge of commercial UAS operations, a strong combination of expertise is required. Thales has deep aviation systems integration experience and market knowledge, with 400 airspace management deployments around the world. Airspace Link, led by veterans of geospatial technologies with over 60 years’ of experience, has extensive geospatial information management expertise.

Thales and Airspace Link have successfully collaborated on projects across the United States, including the development of Vantis, North Dakota’s state-wide UAS network, the first in the nation. Formalizing this partnership will broaden Thales’ robust air traffic management system portfolio and further expand its global market footprint. As an FAA approved UAS service supplier of the Low Altitude Authorization & Notification Capability (LAANC), Thales is supporting UAS traffic management across the U.S. in areas such as New York state. Further, internationally, Thales is providing UAS traffic management for organizations such as the French air traffic management organization, Direction des Services de la Navigation Aérienne.
About Thales

Thales (Euronext Paris: HO) is a global high technology leader investing in digital and “deep tech” innovations – connectivity, big data, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and quantum technology – to build a future we can all trust, which is vital to the development of our societies. The company provides solutions, services and products that help its customers – businesses, organisations and states – in the defense, aeronautics, space, transportation and digital identity and security markets to fulfil their critical missions, by placing humans at the heart of the decision-making process.

With 83,000 employees in 68 countries, Thales generated sales of €19 billion in 2019 (on a basis including Gemalto over 12 months).

About Thales in the USA

In the United States, Thales has conducted significant research and development, manufacturing, and service capabilities for more than 100 years. Today, Thales is present in 22 states, operating 46 different facilities and employing nearly 5,000 people. Working closely with U.S. customers and local partners, Thales is able to meet the most complex requirements for every operating environment.

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