

Press release

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Paris La Défense, France

Teréga and Thales explore pioneering solutions to ensure safe use of long-range UAVs



PHOTO ©Thales

Under an agreement signed today by Teréga, a gas operator and accelerator of the energy transition, and Thales, a global technology leader, Thales will deploy a solution based on long-range UAVs to monitor Teréga's gas pipeline network. The alliance will make it possible to use drones safely to monitor infrastructure beyond visual line of sight, reducing the environmental impacts and operating costs of pipeline surveillance while delivering an enhanced level of service.

The memorandum of understanding between Teréga and Thales covers technical solutions to ensure compliance with French and European regulations on unmanned flights. The Thales solutions will enable 50% of Teréga's over 5,000-kilometre gas pipeline network to be monitored by UAVs, ultimately limiting reliance on the manned aircraft and helicopters in use today, reducing environmental impacts and operating costs, and increasing monitoring frequency. Initial tests over unpopulated areas began on mid-November 2020.

To ensure regulatory compliance, Thales is developing a package of technologies that combines robotics, safety and security systems and certified avionics to guarantee the highest levels of safety for UAV operations:

- trackers to identify, track and control UAVs safely and securely
- geocaging solutions developed with the support of the French Civil Aviation Authority (DGAC) to guarantee that UAVs cannot fly outside their authorised airspace
- anti-jamming solutions to protect the UAV's onboard GPS sensors.

These technologies enable Thales to identify UAVs, secure their flight patterns within a predetermined airspace and maintain their airworthiness.

“As a committed and responsible gas operator in France, Teréga has always considered the safety, security and integrity of our infrastructure an absolute priority. Using UAVs to monitor our networks in real time is a future-oriented solution that will give us a clearer picture of our infrastructure for enhanced reliability. Teréga is proud to have the opportunity to draw on Thales’s expertise for this project.” **Patrick Hamou, Director of Operations for Teréga**

“This collaboration with Teréga is a practical illustration of the huge potential of long-range UAVs when operational safety can be guaranteed. It is a major step forward in the development of the UAV industry, and we’re especially proud to be conducting this pioneering project in southwest France, where both our companies have strong roots.” **Marc Duval-Destin, Vice-President Strategy, Product Policy and Innovation for Thales’s Flight Avionics business**

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 defence, 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).

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About Teréga

Established in South-West France, at the crossroads between major European gas flows, Teréga has shared exceptional know-how for over 70 years in the development of gas transport and storage infrastructure. Today, it continues to develop innovative solutions to overcome the major energy challenges facing France and Europe. A true accelerator of the energy transition, Teréga operates over 5,000 km of pipelines and two underground storage reservoirs representing 16% of the French gas transport network and 24% of national storage capacities. In 2019, the company generated revenues of €500 million and employed around 650 people.

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