



An Bille um Ladrainn a Rialáil, 2025
Regulation of Drones Bill 2025

Meabhrán Miniúcháin
Explanatory Memorandum



AN BILLE UM LADRAINN A RIALÁIL, 2025 REGULATION OF DRONES BILL 2025

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Purpose of the Bill

The Bill provides for the further regulation of the private and commercial use of unmanned aircraft systems, commonly referred to as drones. The Bill creates new and mandatory planning regulatory considerations under the Planning and Development Act 2024 with respect to the private and commercial operation of drones; namely by creating an additional consideration for issuance of a National Planning Statement and by requiring local authorities to prepare objectives for the management of unmanned aircraft system operations. Within the latter, the Bill requires a planning authority to ensure that private and commercial use of drones is prioritised for purposes in the public interest. The Bill further permits any person, a local authority or the Environmental Protection Agency to make a complaint to the District Court with respect to the emission of noise from certain privately or commercially operated drones.

Section 1

Section 1 defines certain terms used in the Bill.

Section 2

Section 2 amends Section 2 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 to insert a definition for the term “unmanned aircraft systems” into that Act. This definition is derived from Commission Implementing Regulation 2019/947¹ and is the same as the definition used in transposing that regulation into Irish law in S.I. No. 24/2023.

Section 3

Section 3 amends Section 26 of the Planning and Development Act 2024, to create a new consideration upon the Minister in the issuance of a National Planning Statement; that is the consistent regulation of the private and commercial operation of unmanned aircraft systems in the public interest. The term ‘consistent’ is used in this section to ensure a uniform national application of the same conditions where a planning authority seeks to make objectives governing the private use of drones.

Section 4

Section 4 creates a new obligation upon a planning authority to prepare objectives, as part of the making of a Development Plan, for the effective management of the private and commercial operation of unmanned aircraft systems in that planning authority area, by inserting a new section, *Section 51A*, into the Planning and Development Act 2024.

¹ OJ L 180 4.7.2019, pp. 12-14

The new section provides that the objectives must ensure that the private and commercial use of unmanned aircraft systems is prioritised in favour of operations in the public interest and provides a list of such operations. The new section also provides that a planning authority may designate a use not listed as being in the public interest.

The new section requires a planning authority to ensure that the objectives created for the above purposes must be consistent with the policies, measures and guidance contained in the National Planning Statement, as provided for in Section 3. This is to ensure a consistent approach by all planning authorities in the regulation of the private and commercial use of drones.

Section 5

Section 5 amends Section 108 of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992 to allow any person, a local authority or the Environmental Protection Agency to make a complaint to the District Court with respect to the emission of noise from certain privately or commercially operated drones. Recognising that the presence in airspace above and around residential areas of drones can have an impact on environmental noise and noise causing annoyance, this amendment seeks to end the blanket exemption for all aircraft from such provisions by making specific exception for unmanned aircraft systems used for private or commercial purposes. The new section also provides for the insertion of the same definition of ‘unmanned aircraft systems’ into Section 108 of this Act as referred to above.

Section 6

Section 6 gives the short title of the Bill and provides for the Bill’s commencement by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

*Roderic O’Gorman, TD,
Deireadh Fómhair, 2025.*

