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ROBONIC'S KEMIJÄRVI UAV TEST RANGE SECURES FIRST CUSTOMER

Robonic's Arctic Test UAV Flight Centre (RATUFC) at Kemijarvi, Finland will commence commercial operations in mid June with a lead customer having now been confirmed.

The customer, who cannot be named for commercial reasons, anticipates a seven day flight programme with a state of the art unmanned air vehicle.

The new range has been established by Robonic Ltd of Tampere, Finland, makers of the worlds premier unmanned air vehicle ground launch systems. According to Robonic Managing Director Juha Moisio, "the commencement of commercial flight operations at RATUFC represents a major breakthrough in the evolution of the European unmanned air vehicle sector.

"Designers and manufacturers of UAVs world over continue to seek access to airspace where new and innovative concepts can be tested with the surety of low risk to both other airspace users and without posing a risk to persons or infrastructure on the ground. RATUFC represents a cost effective environment where that airspace is available within Europe for the first time."

In parallel to announcing its first customer, RATUFC is also announcing that the total range area available for commercial usage now stands at 11,000 square kilometres of air space. "Our facility is now amongst the largest ranges of its kind in the world" Moisio says, "with an airspace larger than the country of Belgium".

The range has a 1400x23 metre airstrip.

RATUFC provides for a turn-key operation to its customers by negotiating all domestic clearances with Finnish authorities, logistics and provides for a test platform for UAV systems providers.

"We are extremely proud to be able to announce the commencement of services at this facility" Moisio says, and look forward to "its ongoing role as part of the developing European and international drive to develop a sustained unmanned air vehicle systems market for both the civil and military user communities.

"We envisage that the range will prove particularly attractive to companies wishing to explore new and innovative applications of unmanned systems technologies in the civilian marketplace, particularly in the context of development of systems that will be able to operate in non-segregated airspace in the future. "

The UAV sector has previously been restricted to the use of purpose developed military or state-owned and operated facilities, with few commercial flight environments available anywhere in the world.

Robonic Arctic Test UAV Flight Centre (RATUFC) is a sister company of Robonic Ltd of Tampere, Finland and operates from the Kemijarvi airfield, some 70 kilometres east of Rovaniemi, above the Arctic Circle.

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