

Week commencing 21 September 2026

COVERAGE

7 – 20 September
2026

AUDIENCE

Security directors · C-UAS programme leads · airport and critical site
operators

HANDLING

Internal use — not for onward
distribution

IF YOU JUST REMEMBER ONE THING FROM THIS BRIEFING...

A jet-propelled drone nearly struck Ukraine's president's aircraft in Moldova — the threat model for VIP movements just changed.

On 9 September a jet-powered drone came down 160km from Chişinău airport minutes after President Zelenskyy's aircraft was cleared for take-off; Moldova's ambassador called the timing unlikely to be coincidental. This was not a perimeter breach. Ask whether your VIP protective plans treat a drone as a threat to the aircraft, not only to the ground.

FORTNIGHT IN REVIEW

Incidents and sector activity

PRIORITY

9 SEP

Drone forces Zelenskyy's aircraft to hold at Chişinău before Oslo flight

Moldova closed its airspace on 9 September after detecting a jet-propelled drone while President Zelenskyy's aircraft waited to depart Chişinău for Norway's royal funeral. It came down 160km away once his flight was cleared. Norway's prime minister said the aircraft was "almost hit".

So what: treat a VIP movement through your airspace as a credible drone target in its own right, not only fixed ground infrastructure.

PRIORITY

16-17 SEP

Polish airports suspend flights on consecutive days as Russian drones hit western Ukraine

Rzeszów-Jasionka and Lublin airports each halted operations for about 40 minutes on 16 and 17 September as Polish forces scrambled jets against Russian drones approaching Ukraine's western border. No Polish airspace violation was confirmed either day.

So what: precautionary closures near the border are becoming routine. Confirm continuity plans assume short-notice restrictions, not only confirmed incursions.

WATCH

20 SEP

Luxembourg's Findel airport shuts down over disputed drone sighting

Findel suspended flights and diverted 19 aircraft late on 20 September after reports of "potentially bigger drones", the prime minister said, and Luxembourg deployed extra detection assets from foreign partners. Analysts reviewing the video suggested the objects may have been manned-aircraft lights.

So what: a confident government response followed an unverified sighting. Escalation criteria should require sensor confirmation, not visual reports alone.

WATCH

17 SEP

UK unveils DEODE laser to blind drone sensors, including fibre-optic FPVs

Instro Precision launched DEODE at DVD 2026 on 17 September, a lightweight directed-energy system that disables a drone's electro-optical payload rather than the airframe — a mission kill against FPV drones and loitering munitions immune to RF jamming, including fibre-optic types.

So what: a non-kinetic option against jam-proof threats is approaching service. Check whether it fits your effector legal envelope before assuming jamming is the only recourse.

ACTION TABLE

Developments to track this fortnight

DEVELOPMENT	TYPE	WHY IT MATTERS FOR A PROTECTED SITE	ACT BY / WATCH
Zelenskyy aircraft drone near-miss	Incident	VIP and aircraft movements are now credible targets, not just ground sites.	Watch: inquiry
Polish airport closures, 16-17 Sep	Incident	Precautionary shutdowns near the border are becoming routine.	Watch: pattern
Luxembourg Findel drone shutdown	Incident	Contested identification undermines confidence in escalation calls.	Act: review rules
Instro DEODE directed-energy launch	Capability	Non-kinetic mission kill emerging against jam-proof fibre-optic drones.	Watch: service entry
UKDI prison C-UAS, Cycle 8	Procurement	£1.85m for low-collateral last-line-of-defence effectors.	Act by 22 Sep

Sighting reports and vendor claims are as stated by the source; neither is independently verified here.

REGULATORY AND SECTOR WATCH

What changed, and what is coming

In force now

- UK 400m/400ft flight restriction zones around every closed prison and YOI remain in force under SI 2023/1101.
- Defeat measures stay restricted to police and authorised bodies under the 2021 Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Act; site operators may only detect and track.

Approaching

- EASA's U-space light proposal remains in consultation after member-state feedback to mid-July; a formal opinion is not expected before the next edition.
- UKDI's Cycle 8 prison and sensitive-sites C-UAS competition closes midday 22 September, ahead of autumn contract awards.

Standing watch — NATO Eastern Sentry. Layered counter-drone exercises continue along the eastern flank, most recently in Romania. No operational change for site operators; treat it as backdrop, not the story.

RECOMMENDED

Three things to do before the next edition

- Confirm VIP and high-profile arrival plans treat drones as a threat to the aircraft, not only the site.
- Set escalation criteria that require sensor confirmation before declaring a drone sighting, per Luxembourg.
- Track DEODE and other non-kinetic effectors against fibre-optic drones for your own effector roadmap.

OUTLOOK — NEXT FORTNIGHT

We assess it is likely that further precautionary airport disruptions follow Russian strikes near Poland's border. Contested drone sightings at European airports are a realistic possibility as detection outpaces verification. Neither the EU U-space rule nor the UK prison C-UAS award will land before the next edition.

NEXT EDITION

Monday 5 October 2026. Send additions, corrections or sector intelligence to your ClearPath engagement lead.

