

# PRESS RELEASE



Defense, June 8, 2017

## FIRST IN FRANCE: A COMMERCIAL DRONE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES A FLIGHT OF 50 KM VIA 3G CELL NETWORK

**Today at 11:00 a.m., RTE and Delair-Tech set a new distance record when they flew a civilian drone 50 kilometers.**

The official purpose of the flight, which took place between the substations of Distré (Maine-et-Loire) and Assais-les-Jumeaux (Deux-Sèvres), was to inspect by remote camera RTE's power lines as well as recording data that would allow it to build models of its European power grid.

In adapting the drone to travel 50 kilometers, Delair-Tech has again demonstrated its capacity for innovation, using for the first time a 3G communication network to guide the drone. The breakthrough was made possible by RTE et Delair-Tech bringing together two worlds, 3G and aeronautics, that until now have remained far apart.

For this landmark flight, two pilots were used for takeoff and two for the landing phase. The flight was on autopilot with the GPS data integration within the drone. To enable this experimental 50 kilometer flight, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) granted the companies the right to use a specific flight corridor and defined a clear regulatory framework.

*"More flexible to use, the UAV offers a complementary solution to helicopter inspections for network maintenance conducted by the RTE. This first 50 kilometer flight illustrates the RTE's commitment to constant innovation that contributes to electricity that is safer, cheaper, and more respectful of the environment,"* said Patrick Bortoli, Director of Maintenance RTE.

*"We are delighted to partner with RTE, confirming that renowned industrial customers are committed to drone solutions. In collaboration with RTE, we used for the first time in France a 3G network to guide the drone, allowing real-time communication from any distance. This removes an important technological barrier. It is a first step toward making drones the most common method for inspections of infrastructure that stretches over large distances, such as power lines and pipelines. Drones offer enormous potential to deliver strong efficiency gains for our customers,"* said Michael Lagarde, President & Co-Founder of Delair-tech.

RTE has been experimenting with the use of drones in its operations since 2011. The company in 2016 began using drones more extensively for shorter-range inspections of its electricity transmission network and its cable laying. RTE hopes to one day be using drones for longer-range missions, which could help reduce the cost, mitigate the danger of inspections on infrastructure that is remote and difficult to access, and avoid long interruptions to electricity service when maintenance must be done.

## About RTE

RTE, Transmission System of Electricity, is a service company. Our fundamental mission is to provide all our customers with access to a safe, clean, and economical power supply. RTE connects its customers with a suitable infrastructure and provides them with all the tools and services that enable them to meet their needs, with a view to economic efficiency, respect for the environment, and security of energy supply. To this end, RTE operates, maintains, and develops the high and very high voltage network. It guarantees the functioning and safety of the electrical system. RTE transports electricity between electricity suppliers (French and European) and consumers, whether they are electricity distributors or industrialists directly connected to the transmission network. There are 105,000 km of lines between 63,000 and 400,000 volts and 50 cross-border lines which connect the French network to 33 European countries, thus providing opportunities for electricity exchanges essential for the economic optimization of the electricity system. RTE employs 8,500 people.

## About Delair-Tech

Delair-Tech is a French company and leader in the market for commercial drones which offers complete UAV solutions. That includes hardware, software and services for use in agriculture, geomatics, security and defense, transportation, electric power, oil and gas, and mining. Delair-Tech's powerful solutions help industrial customers leverage aerial observation to make critical decisions. Delair-Tech is available in 80 countries through more than 150 distributors. More information [www.delair-tech.com](http://www.delair-tech.com)

## Media contacts

RTE: Stephen MARIE | [stephen.marie@rte-france.com](mailto:stephen.marie@rte-france.com) | +33 (0)1 41 02 16 76

Delair-Tech: Pauline LESCUR | [pauline.lescur@delair-tech.com](mailto:pauline.lescur@delair-tech.com) | +33 (0)9 71 16 99 26

Download image of the press release:

