Overview of the Drone industry in Lithuania

Use:

Drones are used in Lithuania not only to take photos or videos during various events, they are also used by private companies and public utilities for multiple other purposes like for example helping to find and rescue drowning people and detect dangerous holes on the sea bed or analysing dunes movements. Drones are also used to prevent illegal fishing, to help police in various difficult missions, to extinguish fires, to create maps, to fertilize fields or check the condition of train railroads, electricity networks, building inspections and more.

Presence:

Lithuanian Companies:

- LASERPAS: First independent RPAS operator in the Baltic States engaged in the activity of developing state-of-the-art payload control and image processing systems. They are a subsidiary company of Avia Solutions Group and were launched in March 2015. They use UAV Factory's fixed-wing drones and also use multirotor drones. They work with industrial cameras (Bassler and Allied Vision…). Focusing on providing a full solution to companies, they don't manufacture their own drones but integrate different solutions together. They operate for utilities companies, agriculture, railways. They also do smart inspection of buildings with 3D technology.

- Magma Solutions: Develops AirVision, a vision based localization and navigation system for UAVs and autonomous robots in GPS denied environment. Their system is mainly directed to the army, law enforcement and public safety, but can also be used for more accuracy in urban areas. They also develop their own gimbal, designed to integrate, process and transfer the data collected in order to provide real time vision. They work on a project of vertical takeoff remote aircraft in partnership with 4 different companies and a Technical University. For now they only cover Lithuania.

- Space Science and Technology Institute: SSTI is a non-governmental organization established in 2010 by Lithuanian Space Association and intended for aerospace and defense related research and technology development transfer to the business entities. In Lithuania, they are the main manufacturer of military drones.

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- **Infoera**: Uses TRIMBLE (BE) drones for mapping and geodesy. The company also organises trial flights and training.

- **Hnit Baltic:** Uses drones for mapping. They use Swiss drones Sensefly eBee and GIS systems. The company also organizes mapping training for students.

- **Miniskipas**: A Logistic company that works in combination with cranes and special equipment providing loading and storing services as well as cargo transportation. Recently they started to work on the development of drones. They are now producing different types like <<Training Drones>>, Fixed-Wing drones for measurement, heavy lifting drones and small spying drones. Their products are cheap and easy to use. The company is only starting to work on the drone production chain but their aim will be not only to sell drones, but also to provide a full solution of training, operating etc...

- **ELKO** (distributor in the Baltic States): Elko is one of the largest IT product wholesalers in Eastern Europe. On summer 2015, they entered in agreement with AEE Technology Co. Ltd (Chinese drone manufacturer) to distribute their products in the Baltics.

- **GeoNovus**: Distributor of Trimble (BE) drones in Baltic States.

- **PROMAKSA**: Official distributor of DJI production in Lithuania. Company offers DJI drones, accessories, spare parts and technical services.

- Lithuanian Shops and e-shops selling drones or spare parts directly to customer: Robotshop.lt, Dronai24.lt, Allriders.lt, Rchobis.lt.

Concurrence:

Foreign manufacturers distributed in Lithuania:
- AEE (China)
- DJI (China)
- Walkera (China)
- Parrot (France)
- Yuneec (China)
- 3drobotics (US)

Association:

LBONA is the Lithuanian Remotely Piloted Aircraft Users' Association responsible for dealing with various issues linked to drones utilization. The association coordinates members' activities, delivers certificates, registers, classifies and assess drones, provides licences, organises training and prepares offers to Lithuanian Civil Aviation

Administration. They started working on a drone localization chip working with gsm network that will be integrated on some commercial drones. They also work closely with Lithuanian Universities.

Law:

Lithuanian Parliament has issued terms of use for drones. Registration of a drone is not needed if it weighs less than 25kg. A Drone cannot exceed 1000m of distance from his owner and it has to keep at least 50m distance from all kind of vehicles, buildings and people.

Perspectives:

Drones are planned to be used for a wide range of applications such as removing chemicals or detecting gas leaks. In Agriculture, they also can be programmed to act as bees to pollinate crops. Lithuanian universities are monitoring many researches on drones and their possible applications. Thanks to drones they are working closely with agriculture consultants to study landscape monitoring, sinkholes, erosion, soils potentials, and precision farming.

Drones are also creating some trouble, people flew drones over the Russian border for black market profitable reasons and drones have been seen flying over prisons. So a new challenge is to develop neutralisation and surveillance systems to prevent such illegal uses of drones.

The development of the drone industry in Lithuania is facing various issues since drones operators are often lacking experience, which results in many crashes and damages to drones. The Medias are also reporting many negative stories about drones while paradoxically they are using them for their documentaries and reports. It will take time to educate Lithuanians on all the benefits they could get from the development of the drone industry. But some Lithuanian companies and the Lithuanian drone association are working together to change the public attitude towards those aeronautical robotic devices.