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Legal perspectives on the cross- border operations of unmanned aircraft systems

Fiallos Pazmino, L.F.

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The incursion of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) is radically shaping the future of international civil aviation. This technological innovation is creating disruptions in almost all areas of people's activities. Will unmanned aircraft (UA) ever perform international commercial flights carrying passengers, freight and mail routinely? Will UAS enable new markets and spur economic growth and job creation worldwide? What is happening right now? To what should we be paying attention? What things may influence the future of unmanned commercial aviation? What are the legal challenges? This research aims to explore the current legal and regulatory frameworks from the angle of how they may facilitate the routine and cross-border operations of UAS. It specifically analyses the legal and regulatory challenges that civil UAS confront when used in cross-border operations, as follows:

- The legal regimes of the airspace;
- The notion of aircraft;
- The concept of international air navigation in relation to international air transport; and,
- The regulatory regime of safety.

In this endeavour, the author has also resorted to the rules of treaty interpretation laid down in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties to give legal coherence and pragmatism in interpreting and applying international aviation rules to UAS.

This is a volume in the series of the Meijers Research Institute and Graduate School of the Leiden Law School of Leiden University. This study is part of the Law School's research programme 'Exploring the Frontiers of International Law'.

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L.F. FIALLOS PAZMIÑO