

SYMPOSIUM ON COMMERCIAL SPACEFLIGHT SAFETY ISSUES (D6)
Commercial Space Flight Safety and Emerging Issues (1)

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CERTIFICATION OF A SUBORBITAL AIRCRAFT

Abstract

As suborbital vehicles are close to test flights, certification issue is raising. The United States adopted a temporary licensing regime for suborbital flights under sponsorship of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). In Europe, as suborbital projects did not yet come to maturity, no certification process exists, even if the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) explored the possibility to prepare for this approach under the concept of "Suborbital Aeroplanes" (SoA) some years ago.

Dassault Aviation entered discussions on the subject with EASA as the company is concerned because of the VSH project, which is a manned suborbital vehicle. Based on its experiment as a business jet manufacturer and more recently upon certifications for military aircraft, Dassault Aviation's approach will privilege a step-by-step regulatory approach, to be reviewed after some years when the market will be larger. But all elements, such as legal status of crew and passengers, licensing of crew and vehicles, registration, 2nd and 3rd party liability, must be included from start.