



European Union Aviation Safety Agency

## FAQ n.142992

### FAQs:

#### Higher Airspace Operations (HAO)

### Question:

**What types of higher airspace operations exist today?**

### Answer:

Several higher airspace operations already exist today within the scope of civil aviation, primarily in experimental, research, or early operational contexts. These include:

Existing or experimental operations include:

- High-altitude aircraft operations (typically up to 18–25 km),
- High-Altitude Long-Endurance (HALE) UAS (approximately 18–30 km),
- High-altitude balloon operations (20–40 km),
- Sounding rockets and experimental vehicles reaching altitudes well above 80 km.

These operations differ significantly from conventional air transport in terms of performance, endurance, flight profiles, and interaction with other airspace users, which highlights the need for tailored and proportionate aviation regulatory approaches. Other types of activities, such as spaceflight or military operations, also take place at higher altitudes but fall outside EASA's civil aviation remit and are therefore not directly addressed within this framework.

### Last updated:

08/01/2026

### Link:

<https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/142992>