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Majority of Reported Drone Incidents in Europe Not Linked to Russia – Trouw

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Munich Airport. **Enrique Kaczor / onw-images / dpa**

The vast majority of recent reports of drone activity across Europe have not shown any evidence of Russian involvement, according to analysis by the Dutch newspaper Trouw, undercutting warnings from some European officials who have suggested Moscow was likely behind the incidents.

Out of approximately 60 reported sightings in 11 countries from August to November, only four — in Poland, Romania and Moldova — involved confirmed Russian drones that were either shot down by NATO aircraft or identified through recovered debris, the newspaper reported.

Trouw, which reviewed dozens of incidents using the platform Dronewatch, said the origin of 40 reported sightings could not be verified at all, with no visual, radar or debris evidence to confirm a drone's presence.

At least 14 reports were later attributed to ordinary aircraft, helicopters, ships or even stars. A

map compiled by Trouw showed three hobby or tourist drones and 11 other objects that were ultimately deemed not to be drones.

Those findings jar with recent statements from European officials, including Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and his Danish counterpart Mette Frederiksen, both of whom suggested Russia could be behind suspected drone flights over Scandinavia.

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte cautioned in September that the source of the reported sightings remained unclear.

The Kremlin has repeatedly denied any involvement.

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Trouw said the high number of false alarms reflects the difficulty of detecting drones, particularly when reports rely heavily on human observation, as well as heightened public and media sensitivity amid tensions between Russia and the European Union over the war in Ukraine.

Several European governments have moved to bolster air defenses in response to the reported sightings.

Belgium, for example, has installed new drone-detection systems, while the Netherlands plans to spend up to 2.5 billion euros ($2.9 billion) on mobile weapons platforms, an anti-drone cannon and additional detection and jamming technologies.

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