

Police like “Minority Report” soon?

When reality meets fiction, municipal police officers will be able to use drones worthy of science fiction films such as Minority Report within a broader legal framework.



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Thermal camera, flight speed reaching up to 72 km/h, flash of a suspect from a distance, integrated loudspeaker. These are the functions that equip the drones used by the police. During a test flight of the "Mavic 2 Entreprise" drone in a district of Hay-les-Roses in Val-de-Marne, Mayor Vincent Jeanbrun gives us his opinion on his gadgets of the future.

"Drones are the future!" exclaims enthusiastically Mr Jeanbrun. Mr. Jeanbrun specifies the usefulness of drones in foiling ambushes before an on-call intervention to check if particular gangs are hiding on the roofs. Drones will be one of the key points of the proposed law on global security, which will be voted on around mid-April 2021.



Article 22 of the text specifies that municipal police officers may be authorized to capture images with drones, record them, or transmit them live. The legal framework for this action is defined in the following points:

- Prevention missions and breaches of public order
- Protection of the safety of people and property
- Judicial police missions

Security guards have been set up to address the risks and fears of abuse linked to this law. First, the municipal council must deliberate and sign a "coordination agreement" with the state security forces prior to implementation. The prefect will issue the authorization for six renewable months and control the scope of action and the purposes.

For those who feared a Minority Report drone, the legal framework specifies that facial recognition and viewing the entrance and interior of homes will be prohibited. Recordings will be destroyed within 30 days, except in the event of a judicial, administrative or disciplinary investigation. Each city will have to send an evaluation report to the government. A debate will be scheduled within two years of the application of the law within the assemblies of each municipality. The CNIL (National Commission for Information Technology and Liberties) will also give its opinion. This proposed law will help the police in their field of action.

For the mayor, Mr Jeanbrun, the law does not seem far enough, and he imagines drones flying permanently over defined areas to guarantee the safety of citizens. This law, subject to debate, raises a fundamental question about the future of technology in our society. Do we want to live in a society with more cameras and surveillance devices via the security argument?