

In-progress Safety Investigation Statement

Ref. AAIU-2021-04-17-01
Issue date: 17 February 2023

This document informs about the initiation and progress of a safety investigation that has been initiated by the Air Accident Investigation unit (Belgium) in accordance with Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and Regulation (EU) No 996/2010.

The information may still be subject to change

SYNOPSIS

Occurrence class	Accident
Occurrence category	Glider towing related events (GTOW) Loss of control - inflight (LOC-I)
Date and time ¹	17 April 2021 13:22 UTC
Location	Aerodrome of Cerfontaine (EBCF)
Aircraft	Valentin Mistral-C
Aircraft category	Fixed wing - Sailplane - Non-powered
Location of departure	Aerodrome of Cerfontaine (EBCF)
Planned destination	Idem
Type of operation	Non-commercial - Local
Phase of flight	Takeoff
Injuries	1 serious
Aircraft damage	Substantial

The pilot after having received a refresher training in the previous days, wanted to make a solo flight with a Mistral C sailplane, a type he never previously flown.

The pilot received a briefing before the flight, done by a sailplane instructor.

The sailplane was prepared and after a pre-flight check, the sailplane and pilot were ready to go. The sailplane was to be towed by the aeroclub towing airplane, a Piper PA18-180 for a take-off on runway 30L.

The sailplane started to accelerate, but after lift-off, it developed a porpoising movement. This increased and the pilot of the sailplane released the tow cable.

The sailplane was then at a height of 15 m and it was seen going down in a left turn. The sailplane impacted the ground, injuring the pilot's back

¹ All time data in this report are indicated in UTC, unless otherwise specified

PROGRESS OF THE INVESTIGATION

For the investigation, the following sources were used;

- witness statements,
- wreckage inspection
- FLARM recording analysis

The report is being finalised.

In accordance with ICAO Annex 13 standards and EU 996/2010 regulation, the report will be forwarded to the following organisations to receive their comments and remarks: - EASA, - DGTA/DGLV - the German BfU, as the state of registration and as the State of Design and Manufacture of the aircraft.

After reception of the comments and remarks, the final report will be published on the website of the Federal Public Service for Mobility and Transport.