

Lufthansa plane nearly collides with drone near Warsaw

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Warsaw, Poland: A Lufthansa plane approaching Warsaw's international airport nearly collided with what appeared to be a drone, the first ever such incident for the German airline, officials said Tuesday.

Przemyslaw Przybylski, the spokesman for Warsaw's airport, said the incident occurred Monday afternoon around 4 p.m. when a drone passed within 100 meters (300 feet) of the plane arriving from Munich.

He said the near-collision did not occur at the airport itself, but 5 kilometers (3 miles) away near Piaseczno, a town south of Warsaw.

Police are investigating the incident to determine who operated the drone, which should not have been where it was.

A spokeswoman for Lufthansa, Bettina Rittberger, was more hesitant about declaring the object a drone. She said that "a black object appeared on the right side of the plane" at an altitude of 2,500 feet (760 meters) and that the crew "supposed that this object could be a drone." She said she couldn't give more details until the investigation produces more results.

"Lufthansa had not encountered a similar situation before," she told The Associated Press in an email.

Mikolaj Karpinski, with the Polish Air Navigation Services Agency, told the TVN24 broadcaster that the pilots immediately reported the drone to air traffic controllers, who redirected the plane's path. Karpinski said he considered the incident serious.

The agency said that after the incident it redirected 20 other arriving planes. It said helicopters and an air force plane flew over the area where the drone appeared but did not find it.

- AP