

Eurocopter's X³: A revolutionary new spin on the helicopter lands in the United States

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The Eurocopter X³ hybrid aircraft has arrived in the United States for a month-long tour to demonstrate this advanced high-speed transportation system's unique operational capabilities for both civil and military operators.

Transported aboard a chartered cargo jetliner, the X³ touched down in Texas today to complete its trans-Atlantic crossing from France's Istres Flight Test Center. The hybrid aircraft will be based at the Grand Prairie, Texas headquarters of Eurocopter's U.S. subsidiary, American Eurocopter, in preparation for the X³'s official U.S. tour and debut on June 20.

During its American tour, the X³ will visit five locations for presentations that will showcase its exceptional combination of a helicopter's full hover flight capabilities with cruise speeds of a turboprop-powered aircraft. In addition to aerial demonstrations performed with Eurocopter's test team, the X³ will be available for flight evaluations by selected U.S. armed services personnel and civilian operators.

In testing to date performed from the Istres Flight Test Center in southern France, the X³ easily surpassed its original speed target of 220 kts.; reaching more than 230 kts. in level flight while using less than 80 percent of available power. Beyond confirming its excellent flight qualities, maneuverability, outstanding acceleration and deceleration capabilities, the hybrid aircraft has shown exceptional climb and descent rates along with very low vibration levels – all without any need for passive or active anti-vibration systems.

“After our highly successful flight trials in Europe, the United States tour will underscore the maturity of Eurocopter's answer for applications where mission success depends on short flight duration through maximum cruise speed at reasonable operational costs,” said Lutz Bertling, Eurocopter's President & CEO. “It's important to demonstrate how we are applying innovation in responding to market needs with solutions that are available today, and which deliver cruise speeds 50 percent faster than standard helicopters at highly affordable costs – allowing for significant increases in productivity.”

The X³ demonstrator is equipped with two turboshaft engines that power a five-blade main rotor system and two propellers installed on short-span fixed wings. A wide range of utilizations are envisaged for this hybrid configuration, including long-distance search and rescue (SAR), coast guard duties, border patrol missions, passenger transport, off-shore airlift, along with inter-city shuttle services. It also is well-suited for military missions in special forces operations, troop transport, combat SAR and medical evacuation – benefitting from the combination of higher cruise speeds with excellent vertical takeoff/landing performance.



Eurocopter advanced the hybrid configuration from concept to first flight in less than three years. After going airborne for the first time in September 2010, the aircraft's flight envelope was quickly opened – reaching the initial speed objective of 180 kts. (333 km/hr.) in level flight only weeks later. Flights resumed in March 2011 after a planned upgrade to integrate the definitive gearboxes for operations at full power, with the X³ easily surpassing its original speed target of sustained cruise speeds in excess of 220 kts.

Follow the X³ U.S. tour with daily news and updates
on the company's special events website <http://events.eurocopter.com>
and on: <http://press.eurocopter.com>

About Eurocopter

Established in 1992, the Franco-German-Spanish Eurocopter Group is a division of EADS, a world leader in aerospace and defense-related services. The Eurocopter Group employs approximately 20,000 people. In 2011, Eurocopter confirmed its position as the world's number one helicopter manufacturer with a turnover of 5.4 billion Euros, orders for 457 new helicopters and a 43 percent market share in the civil and parapublic sectors. Overall, the Group's helicopters account for 33 percent of the worldwide civil and parapublic fleet. Eurocopter's strong international presence is ensured by its subsidiaries and participations in 21 countries. Eurocopter's worldwide network of service centers, training facilities, distributors and certified agents supports some 2,900 customers. There currently are more than 11,300 Eurocopter helicopters in service in 149 countries. Eurocopter offers the most comprehensive civil and military helicopter range in the world and is fully committed to safety as the most important aspect of its business.

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