

Eurocopter China and Wuhan Helicopter sign contract for the purchase of three helicopters on the occasion of a French ministerial visit

Wuhan, China, 7 November 2011

The three helicopters are the first Eurocopter models to be included in Wuhan Helicopter's fleet, and comprise two AS350 B3e and one EC120 B. Intended for utility missions, they are scheduled to be delivered in the first quarter of 2013.

A signing ceremony was held on Saturday, 5 November, in Wuhan, Hubei Province, between Wuhan Helicopter and Eurocopter China for the order of two AS350 B3e and one EC120 B light single-engine helicopters, for use in utility missions.

Senior officials in attendance at the ceremony included Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, French Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing, Thierry Mariani, French Minister for Transport, Li Hongzhong, Party Secretary of Hubei Province, Wang Guosheng, Governor of Hubei Province, Ruan Chengfa, Party Secretary of Wuhan City and Tang Liangzhi, Mayor of Wuhan City.

"We are very proud that Wuhan Helicopter has selected two of our most popular light modern helicopters, which reinforces the worldwide recognition of their capabilities," stated Eurocopter China CEO, Bruno Boulnois. "The versatility and reliability of the EC120 B and AS350 B3 make them the ideal choice for general aviation multi-mission activities in China's vast and varied terrains, as well as extreme climate conditions."

There are currently about 1,000 AS350 B3 helicopters in service across 57 countries. Since its first flight, this model has logged nearly two million flight hours, displaying exception lifting power, high endurance, extended range and fast cruising speed. The AS350 B3e is an enhanced version of the Ecureuil family, introduced earlier this year at the Heli-Expo in Orlando, equipped with a more powerful engine, new-generation FADEC (Full Authority Digital Engine Control) and an engine data recorder for condition monitoring. Wuhan Helicopter will be one of the first operators in China to receive the new enhanced model.

The EC120 B is a light aircraft designed for mission flexibility. It can be easily reconfigured for whatever tasks required of it. China plays a key role in the EC120 development program – since 1997, it has been producing the airframe structures in Harbin, which are then sent to France for final assembly. To date, over 680 EC120 Bs have been delivered worldwide, and have completed over 1,000,000 flight hours.

Liu Bichao, Chairman of Wuhan Helicopter, expressed his confidence in the acquisition, noting that "Eurocopter has a good track record of providing utility helicopters in China, with proven capability and reliability globally. Coupled with their ability to provide proximity services, this is truly a value proposition that meets our needs."

In China, there are currently 27 Ecureuil helicopters in service, with many more orders in the pipeline mostly for utility missions; and eight EC120 B mainly for business aviation and utility use. The very first EC120 B ordered by a private hospital for helicopter emergency medical operations was delivered in early 2011.



In addition to this purchasing contract, Eurocopter China and Wuhan Helicopter have also sealed a partnership agreement to synergize and develop their general aviation activities to better support emerging customers in the area.

“We managed to secure Wuhan Helicopter as our first customer within six months of our Wuhan office opening, which is indicative of the huge growth potential of the helicopter market in Central China. This is certainly a great way to celebrate the launch of our newest branch office, in addition to our operations in Shanghai, Beijing, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Harbin and Hong Kong,” added Boulnois.

About Eurocopter

Established in 1992, the Franco-German-Spanish Eurocopter Group is a division of EADS, a world leader in aerospace, defense and related services. The Eurocopter Group employs approximately 17,500 people. In 2010, Eurocopter confirmed its position as the world's number one helicopter manufacturer in the civil and parapublic market with a turnover of 4.8 billion Euros, orders for 346 new helicopters and a 49 percent market share in the civil and parapublic sectors. Overall, the Group's helicopters account for 33 percent of the total worldwide civil and parapublic fleet. Eurocopter's strong worldwide presence is ensured by its 30 subsidiaries and participations on five continents, along with a dense network of distributors, certified agents and maintenance centers. There are currently 11,360 Eurocopter helicopters in service and some 2,900 customers in 149 countries. Eurocopter offers the largest civil and military helicopter range in the world.

Website: www.eurocopter.com

About Eurocopter China

Created in December 2006, Eurocopter China is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Eurocopter Group, responsible for sales and customer support activities for the company's entire range of products. In China, Eurocopter China covers a market share of 40%. With over 40 years of presence and 30 years of experience in industrial cooperation in China, more than 160 Eurocopter helicopters have been sold in the country. In order to provide quality service in proximity to Chinese operators, Eurocopter China has established a multi-based organization in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Harbin, Chengdu, Wuhan and Hong Kong staffed with around 55 employees.

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