# Eurocopter's X³ hybrid helicopter wraps up its history-making U.S. tour

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**Eurocopter has completed its highly successful seven-week X³ demonstration tour in the United States, enabling a full range of civil and military operators to witness – and experience – the revolutionary flight characteristics of this high-speed, long-range hybrid helicopter.**

The X³ returned this week to its home base at the Istres Flight Test Center in southern France, where it arrived aboard a chartered cargo jetliner that airlifted the aircraft from Virginia in the U.S.

During its U.S. tour, the X³ made appearances in four states from Texas to Virginia – logging more than 55 hours performed by the Eurocopter test crew, along with opportunities for 47 guest pilots to take the controls for a first-hand appreciation of this aircraft's excellent flight qualities, maneuverability and outstanding acceleration/deceleration capabilities.

Among the X³'s flight characteristics praised by these pilots were its excellent stability and low vibration level, the impressive acceleration and deceleration, the capability to make steep descents while controlling the speed, the aircraft's capacity to hover nose-down or nose-up, and its ability to be flown throughout the entire flight envelope with the autopilot off.

"We are highly encouraged by the overwhelmingly positive feedback from potential future U.S. civil and military users, which once again confirms the need for such a new approach that combines game-changing performance with highly cost-effective economics," said Eurocopter President and CEO Lutz Bertling. "The X³ represents the future of aviation, and we are convinced it can significantly enhance operations across multiple sectors, as underscored by the feedback we received at every stopover in the United States."

The U.S. visit marked the X³'s first-ever major tour, along with its initial appearance outside of Europe. Underscoring the maturity of Eurocopter's hybrid helicopter concept, the aircraft performed its entire tour as planned, from a special kick-off event and a week of demonstrations at the Grand Prairie, Texas headquarters of Eurocopter's American Eurocopter U.S. subsidiary to scheduled presentations at the Redstone Arsenal Army Airfield in Huntsville, Alabama; Simmons Army Airfield at Fort Bragg near Fayetteville, North Carolina; Manassas Regional Airport in Manassas, Virginia; Davison Army Airfield at Fort Belvoir, Virginia;, and the Pentagon, adjacent to Washington, D.C.

Flying presentations throughout the X³ tour were performed by Eurocopter experimental test pilot Hervé Jammayrac, accompanied by flight test engineers Daniel Semioli and Dominique Fournier, along with project and technical team members. Guest pilots provided with opportunities to fly the X³ included aviators from U.S. military services, law enforcement agencies, medical airlift service providers, offshore operators, and the aircraft services sector.



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The $X^3$'s dynamic performance results from its unique configuration, which uses a pair of turboshaft engines to power both a five-blade main rotor system and two propellers installed on short-span fixed wings. To date, the hybrid aircraft has demonstrated a maximum speed of 232 knots at 80 percent power, as well as a rate of climb of 5,500 feet per minute. It also has very low vibration levels without the need for any passive or active anti-vibration systems.

Eurocopter advanced the $X^3$ hybrid configuration from concept to first flight in 2.5 years. After going airborne for the first time at the Istres Flight Test Center 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 validation of the gearboxes for operations at full power, with the $X^3$ easily surpassing its original speed target of sustained cruise speeds of 220 kts.

Leveraging the combination of higher cruise speeds with excellent vertical takeoff and landing performance, the $X^3$ is well-suited for such civil operations as search and rescue, coast guard, border patrol, passenger transport, off-shore airlift and inter-city shuttle services. Military applications in the U.S. include special forces operations, attack, assault, troop transport, combat search and rescue and medical evacuation.

The X3 is designed to be cost-effective, representing a major advantage in military and civilian acquisitions, as well as for operations – with its cruise speed being increased by 50% while life cycle costs increases will be below 20%.

Review the $X^3$ U.S. tour with news and updates on the company's special events website:  and on:

**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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