

Eurocopter's revolutionary X³ helicopter begins its U.S. tour in Texas

Grand Prairie, Texas, June 21, 2012

Eurocopter began the U.S. tour of its X³ high-speed hybrid helicopter yesterday, which will demonstrate the unique operational capabilities of this advanced transportation system during a month of visits to military facilities and hub locations for civil helicopter operators.

The tour was initiated with a debut X³ flight presentation at the Grand Prairie, Texas headquarters of Eurocopter's U.S. subsidiary – American Eurocopter – which was attended by employees, elected officials, customers and industry partners.

In addition to providing the first-ever demonstration of Eurocopter's cutting-edge innovation with the X³ outside of Europe, the company's tradition of rotary-wing excellence was underscored by a Grand Prairie Airport fly-in of its product range, from the pioneering Alouette and BO105 to today's UH-72A Lakota for the U.S. Army, the U.S. Coast Guard's MH-65C Dolphin, as well as the EC225, AS350 and EC145 – which are used in civilian operations, law enforcement, medical airlift and parapublic missions.

"We have a very ambitious innovation strategy leading to the first flight of a new helicopter, a new version or a new technology demonstrator every year. Innovation is not just a buzzword, it's a way of life at Eurocopter," explained President & CEO Lutz Bertling. "With the ingenious design and unparalleled technology of our X³ demonstrator, we are well positioned to bring this type of helicopter to the market in the next 10 years."

Underscoring the X³'s maturity and excellent handling characteristics, some guest pilots and observers were invited to fly aboard the demonstrator aircraft today – an opportunity that will be repeated during multiple demonstrations organized by American Eurocopter at Grand Prairie with the oil and gas, public services, law enforcement and medical airlift sectors. The X³ will then fly to Redstone Army Arsenal Airfield in Alabama; Fort Bragg's Simmons Army Airfield in North Carolina; Virginia's Manassas Regional Airport and military installations in the Washington, D.C. area.

Eurocopter's aircraft configuration for the X³ uses a pair of turboshaft engines to power a five-blade main rotor system, along with two propellers installed on short-span fixed wings. This concept is well adapted to missions requiring long transit flights and where speed is important, while retaining vertical lift and hover capabilities – all at very affordable cost.

The company envisions a wide range of purposes for its hybrid technology in future products, including long-distance search and rescue (SAR), Coast Guard missions, border patrol missions, passenger transport and 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 began X³ flight testing in September 2010 from the Istres Flight Test Center in southern France, where the aircraft easily surpassed its initial speed target of 220 kts.; reaching more than 230 kts. in level flight while using 80 percent of available power. Beyond confirming its excellent flight qualities, maneuverability, outstanding acceleration and deceleration capabilities, the hybrid demonstrator has shown exceptional climb and descent rates along with very low vibration levels – all without any need for passive or active anti-vibration systems.

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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