
Airbus Helicopters signs 123 rotorcraft over five years with three general aviation operators in China

Beijing, July 07, 2014 – On the occasion of German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s state visit in Beijing where she met with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, Airbus Helicopters signs a record 123 civil helicopters with three customers from various Chinese provinces today. The rotorcraft will be used for general aviation activities covering multiple missions including utility work, aerial tours, passenger transport, business aviation, emergency medical services and search and rescue.

The three contracts were signed with Fujian Xinmei General Aviation Co. (GAC), Guangdong Baiyun GAC and Yunnan Fengxiang GAC. The total fleet of 123 helicopters comprises mainly light single-engine helicopters from Airbus Helicopters’ Ecureuil family, as well as the light twin-engine EC135.

“We are grateful to the operators for selecting Airbus Helicopters to be their partner in developing the general aviation market to serve China’s needs,” said Airbus Helicopters CEO Guillaume Faury. “It is evident that China’s relaxation of its low-altitude airspace regulations is enabling the country’s burgeoning helicopter market to realize its potential.”

Fujian Xinmei GAC will be acquiring five units of the AS350 B3e to be delivered this year. Together with their existing AS350 B3e acquired in 2012, Xinmei will become one of the biggest operators of this helicopter type in China. The company, whose core activities include agricultural and utility missions, has also committed to an additional 50 units in the coming six years, made up of light single-engine and light twin-engine helicopters.

Guangdong Baiyun GAC has placed an order for 50 helicopters, consisting of Ecureuil and EC135 helicopters. An EC130 T2 from the Ecureuil family will be delivered this year; while the first three EC135 T2e will arrive by April 2015. The remaining aircraft are expected in the country in the next five years, as Baiyun aims to grow its business in general aviation, particularly in the relatively new segments of helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS), search and rescue and corporate transportation.

Finally, Yunnan Fengxiang GAC, a new general aviation enterprise focused on investing and developing the business of utility operations, is acquiring 18 units of the AS350 B3e, on top of their existing two AS350 B3e. The first four helicopters are scheduled to be delivered this year. The remaining 14 aircraft are expected in the next two years, and Fengxiang intends to engage in multiple missions including aerial tours, business aviation and even HEMS.

“The Ecureuil and EC135 are the most successful light helicopters globally,” added Norbert Ducrot, President of Airbus Helicopters China. “The agreements signed today show that Chinese customers are making the right choice in selecting these aircraft types, which already occupy 60% of the light helicopters market in China.”

About Airbus Helicopters

Airbus Helicopters, formerly Eurocopter, is a division of Airbus Group, a global pioneer in aerospace and defense related services. Airbus Helicopters is the world's No. 1 helicopter manufacturer and employs more than 23,000 people worldwide. With 46 percent market share in civil and parapublic sectors, the company's fleet in service includes some 12,000 helicopters operated by more than 3,000 customers in approximately 150 countries. Airbus Helicopters' international presence is marked by its subsidiaries and participations in 21 countries, and its worldwide network of service centers, training facilities, distributors and certified agents. Airbus Helicopters' range of civil and military helicopters is the world's largest; its aircraft account for one third of the worldwide civil and parapublic fleet. The company's chief priority is to ensure the safe operation of its aircraft for the thousands of people who fly more than 3 million hours per year.

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