

Eurocopter launches the EC135 T3/P3 members of its enhanced helicopter family with orders from the U.S., Norway and Italy

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Eurocopter marked a new milestone in its product line enhancement strategy by launching the improved-performance, updated EC135 T3/P3 helicopter versions at the Heli-Expo 2013 industry show today, signing Air Methods of the U.S., Norsk Luftambulans of Norway, and Italy's Aiut Alpin Dolomites as launch customers.

New features for these latest variants of Eurocopter's EC135 light, multipurpose twin-engine rotorcraft include significantly improved hot/high performance, increased maximum takeoff weight, improved flight envelope, extended range, cockpit innovations and enhanced interior versatility. The T3/P3 designations signify availability of two upgraded engine options on the helicopters: Turbomeca's Arrius 2B2 "Plus" for the EC135 T3; and Pratt & Whitney Canada's PWC 206B3 for the EC135 P3.

Eurocopter's launch customers have ordered both the P3 and T3 versions: Air Methods is to acquire six EC135 P3 helicopters to be utilized in air medical transport missions; Norsk Luftambulans signed for six EC135 P3 rotorcraft in the medical evacuation configuration; while Aiut Alpin Dolomites booked one EC135 T3 for its mountain rescue operations.

"Our EC135 T3/P3 represent the latest examples of Eurocopter's commitment to continually evolve the product line, applying creativity and innovation in delivering optimum performance for operators," said Eurocopter President & CEO Lutz Bertling. "It's particularly appropriate that the initial customers announced today will benefit from the helicopters' superior performance in critical life-saving missions that often are performed in highly demanding conditions."

Changes in the EC135 T3/P3 include a 10-cm. increased length for the main rotor blades, new and optimized software in the FADEC (Full Authority Digital Engine Controls), along with enhanced air intakes compatible with inlet barrier filters that provide engine protection from sand, dust and potential causes of foreign object damage.

Among the resulting improvements are significantly better hot/high performance (with 240 kg. more payload at a 1,500-meter altitude, ISA+20 conditions), improved maximum takeoff weight (a 30 kg. increase to 2,980 kg. when compared with the most recent EC135 P2e/T2e versions), and an improved flight envelope up to -45° C/-49° F (versus -35°C/-31°F).

In the cockpit, notable innovations for the EC135 T3/P3 are the integration of Garmin's GTN 750 fully-integrated navigation, communications, and GPS avionics solution with a large touch-screen display; the installation of Appareo's Vision 1000 flight data monitoring and cockpit imaging device, and an iPad holder with power supply. For passengers, the new EC135 versions are offered with Eurocopter's Stylence® cabin interior.

Further enhancing operational safety is a new external life raft system.



Air Methods' overall existing Eurocopter inventory is composed of more than 330 helicopters, including the EC135, EC130, BK117 and AS350 types.

"We are excited about continuing to improve transport capability and safety for our crews, patients and customers," said Archie Gray, Senior Vice President, Air Methods Aviation Services. "The P3 will give us the ability to operate in extreme environments without any compromise to safety, and shows Eurocopter's commitment to continued product improvements."

Norsk Luftambulanses EC135 P3 rotorcraft will be used in this Norway-based company's emergency medical services. It also ordered one EC145 T2 today, further expanding its Eurocopter-built fleet that currently consists of one EC135 C2 and 11 EC135 P2 helicopters.

"As an EC135 operator since 2000, we are really looking forward to the performance increase promised for the EC135 P3," stated Syver Leivestad, the CEO of Norsk Luftambulans. "It will provide us with increased capability and safety margins – both for mountain rescue and IFR operations."

The EC135 T3 booked by Italy's Aiut Alpin Dolomites is to be delivered in 2014, succeeding its current EC135 T2i – which will have achieved 10 years of heavy-duty service in the rugged Dolomites mountain range next year.

"When it came to choosing a new helicopter, we had no doubts in selecting Eurocopter once again, with the EC135 T3 version giving us higher performance, a gain in loading weight, and faster speeds to the rescue area," explained Raffaël Kostner, the Vice President of Aiut Alpin Dolomites. "Our existing EC135 has been excellent, providing exceptional reliability, along with such operational safety aspects as low downwash during hover and landing, high-up main rotor blades and shrouded Fenestron tail rotor, and the ability to touch down on inclined ground landing locations."

He noted the EC135 T3's improved performance is a great advantage in such missions as evacuating cable cars, especially in extreme weather conditions and just before darkness – when time is of the essence, and three persons could be winched up at a time.

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 22,000 people. In 2012, Eurocopter confirmed its position as the world's No. 1 helicopter manufacturer with a turnover of 6.3 billion Euros, orders for 469 new helicopters and a 38 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 more than 2,900 customers. There are currently more than 11,780 Eurocopter helicopters in service in 148 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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