

Eurocopter breaks ground for its new high-tech integrated development center in Donauwörth, Germany

Donauwörth, May 6, 2011

A groundbreaking ceremony at Eurocopter's German site in Donauwörth today marked the official start of construction work on the company's new integrated development center, part of the Systemhaus project. This unique high-tech platform, due to be completed in 2012, positions the world's leading helicopter manufacturer squarely for the future.

With the Systemhaus project, Donauwörth will concentrate all the resources, skills and equipment required to develop, manufacture, certify and maintain helicopters in one location. Development activities that currently are located at Eurocopter's Ottobrunn site will be integrated into the new building complex, which will have a surface area of 30,000 square meters and is to be situated adjacent to the plant's existing assembly facilities. Furthermore, it offers the opportunity to concentrate activities that today are divided between different locations both in Donauwörth and in Ottobrunn. Some 900 Eurocopter employees will move into this future-oriented innovative development center.

"The Systemhaus project is an integral part of Eurocopter's Vision 2020 strategy and will form the basis for a promising helicopter technology site in Germany – pooling all the necessary key competencies to develop, manufacture and maintain rotary-wing aircraft at one location and securing these capabilities for the future," said Lutz Bertling, President & CEO of the Eurocopter Group. "This undertaking not only brings together development and production activities, it also will accelerate processes by making it possible to create integrated teams. The new development center will help us to successfully develop and manufacture innovative helicopters more quickly, and it will make a substantial contribution towards maintaining Eurocopter's lead in the international rotary-wing marketplace."

In the future, this new integrated development center will host development activities, along with the System Support Center which is run in cooperation with the German Army. Research facilities, simulators and test benches will all be located on the ground floor, while office space on the floor above will follow a flexible office-concept – allowing creativity and a communicative exchange. The communication-friendly building offers an ideal environment for linking competencies in development areas such as aerodynamics, rotor systems, airframe design and avionics, creating a pleasant working environment for everyone.

For Eurocopter, the prudent use of resources is not only important in the lifecycle of a newly-developed helicopter. From the outset, the Systemhaus project planning process emphasized environmentally-friendly and innovative construction. Therefore the building features geothermal heating and groundwater cooling, as well as "green" roofs that can be walked on. There will also be several charging stations for electric vehicles.

Staff from the existing Ottobrunn site will relocate to Donauwörth once construction work has been completed in late 2012. Approximately 780 Ottobrunn employees are affected by the transition.



“Our goal is to accommodate all staff and skills from Ottobrunn in Donauwörth,” said Friedrich Hormel, Director of Human Resources and Senior Vice President of Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH. “We currently are collaborating with the works council, especially to support the relocation and integration – offering future-oriented working conditions at the Donauwörth site, and introducing the option of mobile working.”

Systemhaus is part of Eurocopter’s SHAPE global transformation program, which will see the company invest more than 1.3 billion euros in research and development between 2010 and 2014. These investments will be directed to new helicopter programs, as well as the global expansion of support and service activities. At the same time, Eurocopter will invest an additional 1 billion euros in site modernization to strengthen its market position and extend the company’s international footprint.

“The new Systemhaus integrated development center will make a major contribution to our competitiveness, and it marks an important footprint for Eurocopter’s future in Germany,” Wolfgang Schoder, the CEO of Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH, said. “By relocating activities from Ottobrunn to Donauwörth, the company not only stands to reduce site costs, it also will be able to increase overall efficiency by optimizing processes and leveraging technical and commercial synergies.”

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 11,200 Eurocopter helicopters in service and some 2,900 customers in 147 countries. Eurocopter offers the largest civil and military helicopter range in the world.

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