

Eurocopter and the Tianjin Free Trade Zone establish a partnership framework for a helicopter completion and customization center in China

Tianjin, China, 30 August 2012

In a signing ceremony today witnessed by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, Eurocopter and Tianjin Free Trade Zone inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to explore the creation of a completion and customization center for Eurocopter's Ecureuil family of light helicopters in Tianjin through a joint venture.

Eurocopter intends to expand its local footprint in China by setting up the China Completion Center in Tianjin for the purpose of completing and customizing light helicopters from Eurocopter's best-selling Ecureuil family for the Chinese market. This Center will be designed from the start to enable future growth in accommodating other Eurocopter helicopter types. Eurocopter and the Tianjin Free Trade Zone (TFTZ), a successful partner of Airbus for its Tianjin-based A320 final assembly line, would form a joint venture for this activity, with the target of commencing operations by end 2013.

The MoU was signed by Eurocopter President Lutz Bertling and TFTZ President Feng Zhijiang, on the occasion of Airbus' celebration of the 100th A320 assembled in China. The China Completion Center will be located adjacent to the Airbus Tianjin facility to allow for greater synergy within the EADS Group.

"The new Chinese industrial center will mark an important step for Eurocopter's global strategy of being in close proximity to customers within key markets, while also offering tailored, flexible solutions adapted to local market requirements," Bertling said. "Eurocopter pioneered cooperative programs with Chinese partners more than 30 years ago, and we have never stopped our efforts to develop our presence in the country. Collaboration with Tianjin is a timely and natural progression, as China's general aviation market continues to experience massive growth."

Bertling noted that with helicopter demand expected to increase rapidly in the coming years as China relaxes its airspace regulations, the Tianjin initiative would create a win-win situation for all stakeholders. "Eurocopter will be able to ramp up production, our customers can benefit from faster delivery and prompt services, and the local market will gain an economic boost while also benefiting from international-standard aviation skills," he added.

"We are delighted that Eurocopter has chosen Tianjin to explore the creation of its China Completion Center," commented TFTZ President Feng. "With Eurocopter's expertise and experience, we will be able to develop a pool of highly qualified aeronautical talent locally that will undoubtedly boost Tianjin's development as an aviation hub."



The China Completion Center will handle the completion and customization of helicopters in Eurocopter's lightweight Ecureuil family, which are highly popular worldwide for aerial and utility work, police missions, business aviation as well as heli-tourism. As the first and only helicopter to have successfully landed atop Mount Everest, the AS350 also is the undisputed reference helicopter for utility work in China, with a total of 30 currently operating in the country.

Bruno Boulnois, CEO of the Eurocopter China subsidiary, said flexibility offered through local customization of Ecureuil helicopters, along with their reduced delivery times, will be appreciated by customers. "This is another significant commitment by Eurocopter in supporting the Chinese general aviation sector's development," he explained. "Our company already has launched many other investments in China, including training of local pilots and technicians, the setting up of a spare parts hub in Beijing, as well as developing a country-wide network of support centers."

Eurocopter is the leading turbine civil helicopter manufacturer in China, with nearly 130 helicopters in operation and a 40 percent market share in the sector. Being the first to establish a full-fledged subsidiary in 2006, Eurocopter China has since expanded its presence in the country, with offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Wuhan, Harbin as well as Hong Kong.

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 are currently 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.

Website: www.eurocopter.com

About Eurocopter China

Created in December 2006, Eurocopter China is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Eurocopter Group, responsible for sales and customer support activities for the company's entire range of products. In China, Eurocopter China covers a market share of 40%. With 45 years of presence and over 30 years of experience in industrial cooperation in China, around 180 Eurocopter helicopters have been sold in the country. In order to provide quality service in proximity to Chinese operators, Eurocopter China has established a multi-based organization in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Harbin, Chengdu, Wuhan and Hong Kong staffed with around 65 employees.

Website: www.eurocopter-china.com



About Tianjin Free Trade Zone

Tianjin Free Trade Zone (TFTZ) is an economic development zone of Tianjin Binhai New Area (TBNA) within the jurisdiction of Tianjin municipality. The TBNA is highlighted by China central government as a new growth pole in China in the new century after Shenzhen Special Economic Area and Shanghai Pudong New Area. Tianjin, with a population of 12 million, is bordered by Beijing only 120 kilometres (75 mi) to the northwest. Tianjin boasts a leading economic center and largest sea port in northern China.

TFTZ, with its comprehensive advantages and its vision of building up Tianjin's reputation as a first-class cluster for aviation & aerospace industry, has attracted a significant number global aviation companies such as Airbus, AVIC, Goodrich and Zodiac, investing and establishing a strong foothold in Tianjin. There are 142 projects funded by the World's Top 500 Enterprises in TFTZ and its subzone –Tianjin Airport Economic Area.

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