

## **Eurocopter hands over the first upgraded CH-53GA transport helicopter to Germany's armed forces**

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**Eurocopter's delivery of the first production modernized CH-53GA transport helicopter to the German armed forces (Bundeswehr) was celebrated during a ceremony today at the ILA Berlin Air Show.**

The Eurocopter Military Support Center Germany currently is performing the comprehensive upgrade of 40 Bundeswehr CH-53G aircraft to the CH-53GA specification for both national and international deployment – providing the German armed forces with a modern fleet of these helicopters equipped for an operational lifetime lasting beyond 2030.

Handover of first production helicopter for field tests was made by Helmut Richter, representing the Federal Office of Defense Administration, to Army Aviation Commander Brigadier Reinhard Wolski. The Air Force Procurement Commander, Brigadier Herrmann Muntz, also attended the ceremony.

Eurocopter is upgrading the 40 helicopters during a three-year period. In addition to this milestone helicopter's handover today, three others in an initial configuration have been used for training flights since July 2012.

"This CH-53GA upgrade is an impressive example of our close and fruitful partnership with the Bundeswehr, which has seen us working together to implement necessary improvements for the helicopter's future mission requirements," explained Ralf Barnscheidt, Senior Vice President of Eurocopter Germany and head of the Military Support Center Germany. "I want to thank all involved, including the Federal Office of Defense Administration, and those in charge of certification at the Bundeswehr Technical Center 61, the Air Force Weapon System Command and the Army Aviation School."

The CH-53GA is equipped with state-of-the-art avionics and communications systems, which also are approved for use alongside the Tiger support helicopter and NH90 transport helicopter. Additionally, pilots will now be able to make use of a four-axis autopilot with auto-hover automatic flight control system, as well as an up-to-date electronic warfare system for threat recognition and electronic self-protection. In another enhancement, navigational accuracy is brought up to international instrument flight rules (IFR) standards, with the upgrade extending to display and control functions – which are now contained in a glass cockpit with five multi-function displays.

The scope of CH-53GA upgrades also covers Eurocopter's delivery of modular, mission-specific equipment packages installable in line with mission requirements. These include an infrared observation system in the form of a forward looking infrared (FLIR) system, a satellite communications package, along with auxiliary fuel tanks that extend the aircraft's range up to 1,200 km. As part of the refit, weaknesses in the helicopter airframe arising either from age or use also are being addressed and the wiring renewed.



With its modern avionics architecture, the CH-53GA also is ideally prepared for any future expansions of its mission envelope.

### **The CH-53G in action – national and international missions**

During the past 35 years – and indeed for the foreseeable future – the CH-53G has formed the backbone of countless Bundeswehr operations overseas. It is no stranger to harsh conditions. Since entering service, this helicopter has guaranteed not only the flexible transportation of troops and goods within the remit of Germany's NATO obligations, but has also operated since the early 1990s as the crucial support for many deployments in foreign theaters of both the Bundeswehr and many other NATO forces in crisis zones from Kosovo to Kabul. Meanwhile, national and international disasters such as earthquakes and floods have created a full range of essential deployment assignments for the CH-53G.

With the CH-53GA upgrade, the helicopter fleet will meet the Bundeswehr's need to expand the mission capabilities of its transport helicopters for domestic missions and deployment abroad.

### **Maintenance Center for the majority of Bundeswehr helicopters**

Eurocopter's Military Support Center - Germany guarantees support and servicing for practically all helicopters belonging to the German Armed Forces. Besides technical and logistical support, its range of services includes maintenance, repair and overhaul, a logistics and spare parts service, training and instruction, as well as the integration of new systems and upgrades. The Center's headquarters is Eurocopter's facility in Donauwörth; however, employees also are positioned at several Bundeswehr locations to provide immediate on-site assistance for helicopter operations. In the past 20 years, the number of employees has risen from 26 to approximately 800. The teams work in close cooperation with the Bundeswehr, and guarantee worldwide service around the clock.

**Visit Eurocopter at the ILA Berlin Air Show both in the HeliCenter (Hall 3, Booth 3636) and in the EADS Pavilion. For current news and pictures from the air show, go to: <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 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.



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