

Heli-Expo 2011: New agreements for 68 helicopters validate Eurocopter's competitiveness as the industry moves toward a recovery

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Eurocopter booked 68 new orders and agreements during this week's Heli-Expo 2011 exposition while also unveiling a range of new and enhanced helicopter products, confirming the company's highly competitive position for the expected upturn in the world's rotary-wing aircraft sector.

New business concluded during this industry event in Orlando, Florida involved eight of Eurocopter's helicopter types, including the next-generation EC145 T2 that was unveiled during Heli-Expo, along with two members of its enhanced rotary-wing aircraft line-up also announced at the show. These bookings came from operators in the United States, Canada, Europe and Russia.

"There clearly was a more upbeat atmosphere at this year's Heli-Expo event, with strong indications of an increase in our customers' business activity for the second half of 2011," said Eurocopter President & CEO Lutz Bertling. "We are seeing the result of our significant investments in innovation and technology as customers recognize the competitiveness of our product line."

The new EC145 T2, which made its world debut at Heli-Expo 2011, received a total of 17 launch commitments. Spain's INAER signed for 10, and three U.S. customers placed orders for seven: Metro Aviation booked five; with Lewis Energy Group and Leading Edge each signing for one EC145 T2. This upgraded version of Eurocopter's EC145 incorporates a specially-designed Fenestron tail rotor, more powerful Arriel 2E turboshaft engines, an innovative new avionics suite with three large primary displays, a 4-axis autopilot and improved mission capabilities.

Two of Eurocopter's new "e" enhanced helicopters introduced at Heli-Expo 2011 received 18 total orders/commitments.

Ordering the enhanced AS350 B3e version were Air Medical Resource Group of the U.S. with a firm agreement for three helicopters, plus four options; Aero France Hélicoptère, which ordered two; along with an unnamed customer for one aircraft. The AS350 B3e – which was included on Eurocopter's Heli-Expo exhibit stand – is the newest member of Eurocopter's best-selling AStar/Écureuil family, with a more powerful Turbomeca Arriel 2D turboshaft engine, as well as a new-generation digital FADEC (Full Authority Digital Engine Control) and an engine data recorder for condition monitoring.

Bond Air Services of the UK ordered eight EC135 T2e enhanced versions of the twin-engine EC135 helicopter, which has an increased maximum takeoff weight of up to 2,950 kg. – offering a 40-kg. gain in payload and allowing an extra passenger to be carried with a load margin extension from its previous weight rating. As an operator of Eurocopter helicopters since 1973, Bond Air Services will utilize the eight new EC135 T2e rotary-wing aircraft to provide capacity for the company's future mission requirements.



Another highlight of Heli-Expo 2011 was UTair Aviation of Russia's signature of a firm order for 15 of Eurocopter's new EC175 helicopters, firming up a letter of intent announced at Heli-Expo in 2008. This 7-metric-ton category rotary-wing aircraft incorporates a mix of proven and advanced technologies for excellent performance and reliability in a full range of missions, including oil and gas operations, search and rescue, emergency medical transport, and business aviation. UTair will deploy its EC175s in offshore oil and gas operations.

Also booked at Heli-Expo were eight additional orders for the Ecureuil/AStar family, composed of three AS350 B2s, two EC130s and one AS350 B3 for Capitale Hélicoptère of Canada; an AS350 B3 for V. Kelner Helicopters of Canada; and an agreement with an unnamed customer for another AS350 B2.

Completing the Heli-Expo 2011 business transactions was an order from Mexico's Transportes Aéreos Pegaso for five EC145s, with options for five more. Pegaso operates one of the largest Eurocopter fleets in Latin America, and will use its newly-ordered EC145s in transportation missions for the Mexican government's electricity company, CFE (Comisión Federal de Electricidad).

Heli-Expo 2011 provided the opportunity as well for Eurocopter to highlight its comprehensive training and services offer, which included the latest customer announcement for the use of American Eurocopter's new AS350 Level B Full Flight Simulator in Grand Prairie, Texas. This agreement is with the Texas Department of Public Safety, and it underscores the full-motion simulator's capabilities for both pilot and mission training.

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 15,600 people. In 2010, Eurocopter confirmed its position as the world's No. 1 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 products account for 33 percent of the total world civil and parapublic helicopter fleet. Its strong worldwide presence is ensured by its 27 subsidiaries and participations on five continents, along with a dense network of distributors, certified agents and maintenance centers. There are 11,200 Eurocopter helicopters currently in service with nearly 2,900 customers in 147 countries. Eurocopter offers the largest civil and military helicopter range in the world.



For more information, please contact:

Stéphane CHERY

Tel : + 33 (0)4 42 85 60 51

Mob : + 33 (0)6 23 93 71 23

stephane.chery@eurocopter.com

Melanie WOLF

Tel: + 49 (0) 906 71 57 39

Mob : + 49 (0) 151 17 12 63 18

melanie.wolf@eurocopter.com

Priscilla YIP

Tel: +65 6592 7217

Mob: +65 9660 7040

Priscilla.yip@eurocoptersea.com.sg

Pascale FLEURY

Tel: + 33 (0)4 42 85 62 38

Mob:+ 33 (0)6 32 54 05 02

pascale.fleury@eurocopter.com

Gloria ILLAS

Tel : + 33 (0)4 42 85 58 89

Mob : +33 (0) 6 31 47 08 99

gloria.illas@eurocopter.com

Website: www.eurocopter.com

