

Airbus, Dassault Aviation and Alenia Aermacchi propose joint approach to Europe's next generation drone

Leading European companies deliver plan to France, Germany and Italy

Berlin/Paris/Rome (05/19/2014). Europe's Industry is ready to develop a next generation advanced European Unmanned Aerial System (UAS). After their call for the development of a European drone at last year's Paris Airshow, the three most relevant European aeronautical companies have now agreed on further details for a joint approach.

Airbus Defence and Space, Dassault Aviation and Alenia Aermacchi (a Finmeccanica company) delivered a proposal for further defining a European UAS to the Ministry of Defence of France, Germany and Italy. The offer proposes a Definition Phase which has been prepared by joint development teams of Airbus Defence and Space, Dassault Aviation and Alenia Aermacchi and which is backed by an industrial agreement on workshare and a cooperative agreement to start the MALE2020 program.

The definition phase foresees that the three nations define and adjust their requirements for a European UAS development together with their armed forces and the European industry. The definition phase also serves to avoid costly additional developments during production and to reduce financial and development risks to a minimum. A commitment by the nations on the further development of the European UAS has then to be made after finalizing this definition phase: the plan of the Industries leads to an affordable and certifiable solution ready by 2020.

Bernhard Gerwert, CEO Airbus Defence and Space said: *"We have reached an important milestone for the development of a European MALE Drone. The need for our armed forces is indisputable. We are highly motivated to continue our discussions with the Ministries of Defence and are looking forward to launch this first step soon."*

Eric Trappier, CEO Dassault Aviation said: *"It is a unique opportunity to develop in Europe this strategic capacity. For the first time industry starts a project by having a full agreement on the general workshare of the MALE2020 programme. The proposal for the definition phase has been commonly elaborated with joint design teams and therefore demonstrates our industry's strong commitment to this program."*

Giuseppe Giordo, Alenia Aermacchi's CEO, said: *"We identify a clear opportunity for the armed forces to take advantage of an advanced sovereign ISTAR capability to cope with the future high level requirements. Now is the time to drive technology forward and secure Europe's capability in building the next generation of military air system as well as maintain talent and expertise in our industry. "*

Several European nations announced their requirement for unmanned aerial systems. Also the results of the EU Defence Summit in december 2013 allude to an urgent need. The Conclusions of the European Council recognize the development of a MALE UAS as a key capability for European defence.

In light of an increasing dependency of European states on non-european defence equipment, Europe's largest military aviation companies started in June 2013 a joint call for sustaining key capabilities and therefore the continent's sovereignty in constructing the future of military aircraft.

The timeframe of the decision to launch the European UAS is now critical in order to meet this goal.

Europe's largest manufacturers for military aircraft thereby continue the common path for a UAS MALE (Medium altitude – long endurance) program as proposed during Paris Airshow 2013. The three partners are confident in the value of their proposal and are ready to move forward.

About MALE 2020

The MALE 2020 Project foresees the development of an European Unmanned Aerial System for long-range missions at medium flight altitudes (MALE). Besides being an answer to the European armed forces' requirements, it will take into account the need to optimize the difficult budgetary situation through pooling of research and development funding. With a sovereign European development, critical requirements around the certification of drones are inherently built into the programme from the onset. MALE 2020 is orientated to foster the development of high technologies and contribute to sustaining key competencies and jobs within Europe.

About Airbus Defence and Space

Airbus Defence and Space is a division of Airbus Group formed by combining the business activities of Cassidian, Astrium and Airbus Military. The new division is Europe's number one defence and space enterprise, the second largest space business worldwide and among the top ten global defence enterprises. It employs some 40,000 employees generating revenues of approximately €14 billion per year.

About Dassault Aviation

With over 8,000 military and civil aircraft delivered to 83 countries over the last 60 years, logging some 28 million hours in flight, Dassault Aviation has built up expertise recognized worldwide in the design, development, sale and support of all types of aircraft, ranging from the Rafale fighter to the high-end Falcon family of business jets and military drones. Dassault Aviation posted sales of 4.59 billion euros in 2013, and has nearly 11,600 employees.

About Alenia Aermacchi

Alenia Aermacchi, a Finmeccanica company, has a role of primary importance in the world's civil and defence aeronautical industry, counts a total workforce of ca. 11,000 people and operates in the design, development, production and integrated support of commercial and military aircraft, trainers, unmanned aerial vehicles and aerostructures. In 2013 it reported revenues of € 3.34 billion, orders of € 3.98 billion and a backlog of € 9.0 billion

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