
MEDIA DEPARTMENT

Unmanned combat aerial vehicle program kicks off as part of the Rafale F5 standard

Saint-Cloud, October 8, 2024 – On this day, Sébastien Lecornu, French Minister of the Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs, announced the development launch of the unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAV) that will complement the future Rafale F5 standard after 2030.

The announcement was made at a ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the French Strategic Air Forces (FAS) at the Saint-Dizier air base, in the presence of General Jérôme Bellanger, Chief of Staff of the French Air and Space Force (AAE), and Éric Trappier, Chairman and CEO of Dassault Aviation.

“This stealth combat drone will contribute to the technological and operational superiority of the French Air Force by 2033. It is significant that it is being initiated today, as we mark the 60th anniversary of the Strategic Air Forces and the 90th anniversary of the Air and Space Force: in aeronautics — a highly complex field — the future has deep roots, and innovation is built on experience. Dassault Aviation and its partners are proud to serve the French Armed Forces and the French Defense Procurement Agency (DGA). Their renewed confidence honours and obliges us,” declared Éric Trappier.

This UAV will be complementary to the Rafale and suited to collaborative combat. It will incorporate stealth technologies, autonomous control (with man-in-the-loop), internal payload capacity, and more. It will be highly versatile and designed to evolve in line with future threats.

It will benefit from the achievements of the nEUROn* program, Europe’s first stealth UCAV demonstrator.

The Rafale F5 combined with the UCAV and their evolutions, like the Mirage IV in its times, will ensure France’s independence and capability superiority in the coming decades.

* Initiated in 2003, the nEUROn program brought together the aeronautics resources of six European countries, with project management by Dassault Aviation. nEUROn completed its maiden flight in December 2012. More than 170 test flights have been conducted to date. The nEUROn program has lived up to all its promises in terms of performance levels, lead times and budget.

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ABOUT DASSAULT AVIATION:

With over 10,000 military and civil aircraft (including 2,700 Falcons) delivered in more than 90 countries over the last century, 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, military drones and space systems. In 2023, Dassault Aviation reported revenues of €4.8 billion. The company has 13,500 employees. [dassault-aviation.com](https://www.dassault-aviation.com)

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