



European MALE drone development: Airbus, Finmeccanica and Dassault Aviation welcome the signature of the trilateral Declaration of Intent by Germany, Italy and France

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Europe's leading aerospace companies Airbus Defence and Space, Dassault Aviation and Finmeccanica have welcomed the agreement of France, Germany and Italy to conduct a definition study of a European developed unmanned aerial system.

Under the terms of a Declaration of Intent (DoI) signed by the nations today, the companies will conduct a two-year definition study of a Medium Altitude/Long Endurance (MALE) drone. A decision will then be taken on whether to start development and procurement of the system.

Bernhard Gerwert, CEO Airbus Defence and Space said "This important step by industry and government clearly recognises that sovereignty in development of new systems, and specifically in military reconnaissance and unmanned aviation is of strategic importance for European security."

Eric Trappier, CEO Dassault Aviation said: "We welcome this important announcement, which confirms the legitimacy and interest of our joint industrial initiative started in 2013. European countries must develop a sovereign, Next Generation MALE UAS solution, for both military and security missions, which is required by our Armed Forces."

Mauro Moretti, CEO Finmeccanica, said: "The Next Generation MALE UAS represents a step change for the European Defence and Security agenda. This initiative is a unique opportunity to pursue a joint technological path built on proven industrial leaderships all contributing to a single objective."

Today's declaration follows the three companies' submission in May 2014 of a Next Generation MALE UAS study proposal envisaging a 24-month "Definition Phase", immediately followed by a full "Development Phase". This will allow the delivery of the first solutions in the early 2020s.

In light of an increasing dependency of European states on non-European defence equipment and technology, Europe's largest military aerospace companies launched in June 2013 a joint call for the sustainment of key capabilities to ensure the continent's sovereignty in the construction of future military aircraft.

About the MALE 2020 Definition Phase

A definition phase focuses on tailoring new developments to customer requirements. It is the first phase of a system development and serves to reduce financial and development risk to a minimum – thanks to a “trade-off” process – before the launch of the subsequent full scale development addressing with the customers key issues such as competitiveness, sovereignty, growth potential, compliance with joint requirements or certification. Usually a definition phase involves customer countries, their Armed Forces, procurement Agencies and Industries.

About “MALE 2020”

The “MALE 2020” Project foresees the development of an European Unmanned Aerial System for long-endurance missions at medium flight altitudes. Besides being an answer to European armed forces’ requirements, it will take into account the need to optimise 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 more than 38,000 employees generating revenues of approximately €13 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 in 2013, and has nearly 11,600 employees.

About Finmeccanica

Finmeccanica is Italy's leading manufacturer in the high technology sector and ranks among the top ten global players in Aerospace, Defence and Security. Listed on the Milan Stock Exchange (FNC IM; SIFI.MI), in 2014 Finmeccanica generated revenues of about €14 billion. With 273 locations and production facilities in 20 countries, Finmeccanica is a multinational and multicultural group which boasts a significant presence in four domestic markets: Italy, the United Kingdom, the U.S. and Poland. Finmeccanica's core business activities are in the following sectors: Helicopters (AgustaWestland), Defence Electronics and Security (Selex ES, DRS Technologies), Aeronautics (Alenia Aermacchi). The company also has a significant position in Space (Telespazio, Thales Alenia Space), Defence Systems (OTO Melara, WASS, MBDA) and Transportation (Ansaldo STS, AnsaldoBreda).

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