AIRBUS HELICOPTERS LAUNCHES FLIGHT-TEST CAMPAIGN OF H175 IN PUBLIC SERVICES CONFIGURATION

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Airbus Helicopters has kicked-off the flight test campaign of the public services variant of the H175 medium twin-engine helicopter. An initial flight-test campaign was successfully concluded last week after 12 flights. This included a demonstration carried out last week with customer Hong Kong's Government Flying Service (GFS), who became launch customer for this new variant in September 2015 with an order for seven units.

Flight-test activity of the public services variant will resume in December, with two additional aircraft to support the certification process ahead of a planned entry into service in late 2017.

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“I am extremely happy for this unique opportunity to fly the H175 in public services configuration” said Captain Michael Chan, Controller Head of GFS. “The aircraft offers excellent hovering capabilities and high power margin that make it the ideal helicopter to carry out SAR missions over land or sea. I am particularly impressed by the Human Machine Interface, which significantly enhances flight safety and reduces pilot workload. The H175 has met my expectations in every way and I can’t wait to receive the final product to start operations” he added.

One of the benefits of the public services variant is its inherent swing-role capabilities, enabling speedy and seamless re-configuration based on mission requirements. The wide range of missions that can be performed include SAR operations, emergency medical services, firefighting, law enforcement and land/maritime border security patrols.

“I want to thank GFS - a world reference for SAR missions- for their collaboration and constant support in the development of the public services configuration”, said Marc Allongue, Head of the H175 programme. “I am proud of the teams who worked hard to reach this milestone on time. This initial flight-test campaign has demonstrated that the H175 retains its excellent handling characteristics, cabin comfort, smooth ride and low noise levels while dramatically enlarging its mission capabilities”.

GFS’ H175s will have a built-in electro-optical system for observation and tracking, along with an enhanced digital map display, both managed from an operator’s console in the cabin. Other mission equipment include dual hoists, loudspeakers and a steerable searchlight. The H175’s highly capable autopilot will incorporate additional advanced modes to further decrease pilot workload during complicated SAR operations.

Airbus Helicopters has also certified the Automatic Pilot SAR modes for the H175 Oil &Gas configuration, enabling O&G customers to also perform certain SAR missions with their helicopter.

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