INDUSTRY FIRST 4-AXIS AUTOPILOT FLIGHT TEST FOR AIRBUS AS350 AND H125 HELICOPTERS

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Thales and StandardAero announced the successful first flight test of a revolutionary compact autopilot system that will bring Airbus AS350 and H125 helicopters into a new era of performance and safety. The achievement of this key milestone lays the groundwork for this important phase of the Supplemental Type Certification (STC) process and the launch of an unparalleled autopilot solution to the light helicopter market by mid-2021.

Flight testing, which will continue throughout this winter at StandardAero's Langley, British Columbia, Canada facility, demonstrates Thales' and StandardAero's commitment to develop and certify a compact, advanced 4-axis helicopter Autopilot System. Earlier this year, StandardAero/Thales previously announced that WeatherTech, the well-known automotive accessories company, has agreed to be its launch customer. The Autopilot will initially be certified for installation on both the Airbus AS350 and H125 helicopter platforms.

"The launch of this flight test program is a key milestone for StandardAero and Thales. This product combines Thales' Autopilot experience, based on billions of flight hours accumulated and outstanding customer satisfaction, with StandardAero's extensive aftermarket capabilities in aircraft modification and certification. We aim to bring a user-friendly solution offering an unparalleled level of safety and reliability to the light helicopter

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market," said Jean-Paul Ebanga, Thales Vice-President of Flight Avionics activities.

The Thales/StandardAero compact autopilot is an intuitive automatic flight control system on the AS350/H125 that increases safety through reduced pilot workload. It provides stability augmentation, attitude retention and flight director modes such as altitude or heading hold and reduces the risk of aircraft incidents.

“This state-of-the-art, 4-axis autopilot system has been designed as a straightforward retrofit and provides pilots with simplified operation that will help reduce wear and tear on the helicopter while making flying in normal and adverse conditions much easier and safer for the crew and passengers,” said Elvis Moniz, Vice President of Product Development for StandardAero’s Helicopters business unit. “Moreover, with the increase in EMS flying and recent CFIT related helicopter accidents, anything that can help pilots navigate more safely is of paramount interest.” says Moniz.

StandardAero and Thales bring complementary expertise to the collaboration. Thales produces the essential components, including the advanced control management systems, four trim actuators, three intelligent linear actuators and the data concentrator/control panel. StandardAero brings superior expertise in aircraft modification and certification, which enables them to manage the detailed design of the mechanical and electrical systems integration. With their comprehensive FAA (Federal Aviation Authority) certification plan, certification approval is expected mid-2021.



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