SW-4 SOLO OPTIONALLY PILOTED HELICOPTER PERFORMS ITS FIRST FLIGHT WITH NO SAFETY PILOT ONBOARD

News / Manufacturer



- **Maiden flight with no safety pilot onboard performed from Taranto-Grottaglie Airport in Italy**
- **This latest achievement provides further evidence of Leonardo's leading role in Europe in developing 'unmanned' air systems**

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SW-4 Solo optionally piloted helicopter performs its first flight with no safety pilot onboard

Leonardo announced that the **SW-4 Solo optionally piloted helicopter** **successfully completed its maiden flight with no safety pilot onboard** at Taranto-Grottaglie Airport (Southern Italy). The aircraft flew for 45 minutes and all systems performed as expected with excellent controllability and handling qualities. Tests included, among others, remote engine start up and shut down with ground run, automatic take-off and landing, hovering OGE (Out of Ground Effect) and acceleration to forward flight, automatic way point navigation to and from the area of operation and simulation of a surveillance mission. The aircraft reached an altitude of 1500 ft and

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up to 60 knots airspeed during the flight.

Alessandro Profumo, **Leonardo CEO**, said “This latest achievement provides further evidence of **Leonardo’s leading role in Europe in developing ‘unmanned’ air systems**, a sector in which we’re committed to expanding our already significant presence. I would also like to thank Grottaglie Airport and the aviation authorities for their contribution to the successful achievement of this milestone.”

The **Solo RUAS/OPH – Rotary Unmanned Air System/Optionally Piloted Helicopter**, derived from the **SW-4helicopter** produced by **Leonardo** in **Poland** and equipped with advanced systems and sensors also made by the company in Italy and the UK, is designed to operate with or without a pilot on board. Test campaigns have been held in Grottaglie with a pilot onboard since December 2016, combined with various trials in Poland, in order to verify the aircraft’s operational characteristics and validate flight procedures, in both normal and emergency conditions.

Earlier activities in Italy were part of a collaboration started in 2015 between **Leonardo**, Aeroporti di Puglia (AdP) and the Distretto Tecnologico Aerospaziale Pugliese (DTA) for the **“Grottaglie Test Bed”**, which is a candidate to become the Italian solution for national and European industry demands for unmanned aircraft testing. The validation of procedures and regulations for the use of unmanned aircraft are among its key objectives. The trials benefitted from the strong collaboration with ENAC (the Italian Civil Aviation Authority) and ENAV (the Italian Air Navigation Service Provider). The **SW-4 Solo** had also been involved in other successful demonstrations in Italy and the UK.

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