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Finmeccanica – Alenia Aermacchi receives the Premio Nazionale per l'Innovazione, the National Innovation Award

Finmeccanica – Alenia Aermacchi has been assigned the Premio Nazionale per l'Innovazione, the National Innovation Award, established by the Government at the National Foundation for Technological Innovation COTEC. The prestigious award was adjudicated to a thermographic fault detection system for composite materials developed by the research laboratories of Finmeccanica – Alenia Aermacchi.

The method represents a significant improvement over traditional detection procedures such as, for example, the ultrasound system that, although it detects the presence of faults in the structure, is incapable of outlining their shape and size. Instead, the thermographic inspection system, which uses thermographic cameras, scanning devices and data acquisition and processing software, can accurately quantify the fault, thus reducing detection costs because it does away with several steps of the diagnostic process that, in some cases, can even damage the part being diagnosed.

This new system has very promising perspectives at industrial scale. In addition to applications in the aeronautical production sector, thermographic fault detection can be applied to a range of production systems based on carbon technologies, such as railway, naval and ground platforms.

The awards were presented today in Rome at the Auditorium of the Villa Farnesina, by the Minister for Education, University and Research, Stefania Giannini and the Chairman of the National Research Council Luigi Nicolais.

The Premio Nazionale per l'Innovazione, better known as the “Prize of Prizes”, is Italy's most prestigious award for products *Made in Italy* and is aimed at supporting and delivering business value to the best innovative and creative skills in a wide range of activities: industry, design, university and research, public administration and services.

The award assigned to Finmeccanica – Alenia Aermacchi further confirms the Group's capability to keep on the cutting edge of technology by continuously innovating products and services and keeping its attention focused on its business security and sustainability needs. The Group's strategy is in line with European Union guidelines placing the re-birth of the manufacturing industry, according to a model integrating competitiveness and sustainability into a global dimension, as the launching pad for economic growth.

Three are the fundamental elements that Finmeccanica lays at the basis of its companies' technological excellence: an investment policy allocating 11% of its income (1.8 billion euros in 2013) to Research and Development activities. These figures place Finmeccanica at the head of the ranking of Italian companies investing in high technology and third in the world for investments in R&D in the Aerospace and Defence sectors; its capacity to establish synergies with local competences and businesses by collaborating within a global network of Universities, Research Centres and Institutions; focusing attention on the human resources capable of creating innovation within the Group: 14,000 engineers in the field of aeronautics, electronics, telecommunications and information technology, and 16,500 specialised technicians who perform their daily work in the Finmeccanica Group's laboratories and production sites.

An unrelenting commitment which enables Finmeccanica to effectively meet the challenges posed by a global market and to play a major role in driving the recovery of competitiveness in Italy's industrial system.

Finmeccanica is Italy's leading manufacturer in the high technology sector and ranks among the top ten global players in Aerospace, Defence and Security. In 2013 Finmeccanica generated revenues of 16 billion Euro and obtained orders for 17.6 billion euro, with about 64,000 employees operating in 362 sites (of which 138 industrial facilities) in 22 countries worldwide. Listed on the Milan Stock Exchange (FNC IM; SIFI.MI), Finmeccanica is a multinational and multicultural group which boasts permanent industrial and commercial establishments in four domestic markets (Italy, United Kingdom, United States and Poland) and a significant network of partnerships at international level. Finmeccanica's success is based on its technological excellence, which springs from conspicuous investments in Research & Development (amounting to 11% of the revenues), and the constant efforts in developing and integrating the skills, know-how and values of its operating companies. Finmeccanica is active, through controlled companies and joint ventures, in the following sectors: Helicopters (AgustaWestland), Defence Electronics and Security (Selex ES, DRS Technologies), Aeronautics (Alenia Aermacchi, ATR, SuperJet International), Space (Telespazio, Thales Alenia Space), Defence Systems (Oto Melara, WASS, MBDA) and Transportation (Ansaldo STS, AnsaldoBreda, BredaMenarinibus).