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Finmeccanica: AgustaWestland with Northrop Grumman for helicopter competitions in the US***Partnership for the new Marine One Presidential Helicopter and the requirements for the Combat Rescue helicopter***

AgustaWestland, a Finmeccanica company, signed an agreement with the US company Northrop Grumman Corporation to participate in the upcoming US Air Force competition for the new Combat Rescue Helicopter – CRH – and the future competition for the new Marine One (VXX) Presidential Helicopter operated by the US Navy.

The partnership between AgustaWestland and Northrop Grumman is an effective combination of Finmeccanica's leadership in the rotorcraft sector, with the long standing experience of the US company in the field of integrating mission systems and equipment on aircraft destined for the US Department of Defense.

"This agreement," said the Chairman and CEO of Finmeccanica, Giuseppe Orsi, "along with the recent partnership agreements signed with Northrop Grumman by both SELEX Galileo, within NATO's 'Alliance Ground Surveillance' program, and by SELEX Elsag and Vega, for supplying NATO with Cyber Security systems, marks an important passage in the redefining and reinforcing process of Finmeccanica's partnerships on the US market, hence for the Group's international projection."

"We are delighted to have Northrop Grumman as a partner, with their impressive history of supporting the U.S. Department of Defense," said Bruno Spagnolini, CEO of AgustaWestland. "We strongly believe that the AW101 is the right aircraft for both missions and that this team can succeed."

In 2005 the AW101 won the competition to supply a new US Presidential helicopter. Further product improvement in recent years and the development of dedicated configurations for the two US requirements will mean offering an even more advanced helicopter with higher performance. The AW101 is an advanced military helicopter chosen from among 14 operators (among them five NATO countries), most of which have already been put into service for search and rescue and combat missions as well as transportation for heads of state and government. Adopting the AW101 would allow the US Air Force and Navy to take an important step forward in terms of operational capability, performance and security compared to the models currently used by the US armed forces, all with contained costs.

The agreement with Northrop Grumman, one of the world's major players in the defense sectors, means that AgustaWestland can further reinforce its position in the US where the company has a strong industrial presence, through its plant in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) and in support and training services, important success with their commercial products and with government operators and various police forces, in addition to several industrial partnerships. The agreement with Northrop Grumman is only the most recent step towards the continuing reinforcement of AgustaWestland on the world helicopter market where the company increases its presence and competitiveness as a result of important investments in innovation, a range of products which are under continuous expansion and modernization, better services to support their growing customer base and important partnership aimed at improving business opportunities.