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Finmeccanica: new orders worth about EUR 730 million for more than 100 helicopters

Finmeccanica, through its company AgustaWestland, has won orders with a total value of about EUR 730 million for more than 100 civil helicopters.

Among the principal agreements signed during Heli-Expo 2012 (HAI), currently being held in Dallas (USA), was one with the Irish leasing firm Lease Corporation International for AW169-, AW139- and AW189-series helicopters. Other important contracts were also signed with operators Gulf Helicopters, for 15 AW189s, and Bond Aviation, for 15 helicopters, including AW169, AW139- and AW189-series helicopters.

Other important agreements have also been signed with the distributors – one of AgustaWestland's strengths for penetrating particularly important markets. In detail, with Mitsui Bussan for four AW139s for Japanese customers, with Exclases for six AW169-, AW139- and AW189-series helicopters for the Russian market and with UK company Sloane Helicopters for two GrandNew helicopters.

The business results announced at the event confirm AgustaWestland's product range as the most modern and competitive on the global market. The agreements cover both models in production and recognised as benchmarks in the market, such as the AW139, and models currently in the development phase, such as the AW189 and AW169, which will be delivered in 2013 and 2014 respectively.

"Investment in new products and technologies," said Giuseppe Orsi, Chairman and CEO of Finmeccanica, "represents Finmeccanica's most important and decisive strategic policy, with the aim of not merely maintaining, but also further enhancing its operating companies' industrial capabilities and prospects for commercial success in global markets."

Thanks to the AW139-, AW189- and AW169-series, Finmeccanica's helicopter company can offer a family of new-generation products unique to the global market. These 4-8 ton products share common equipment and components, as well as operating capacity, and have the same design philosophy. These characteristics offer greater operating flexibility to operators, simplified training activities and faster maintenance, thus reducing costs.

Finmeccanica plays a leading role in the global aerospace and defence industry, and participates in some of the sector's biggest international programmes through its group companies and thanks to well-established alliances with European and US partners. A leader in the design and manufacture of helicopters, defence and security electronics, civil and military aircraft, aerostructures, satellites, space infrastructure and defence systems, Finmeccanica is Italy's leading high-tech company. It also boasts significant manufacturing assets and expertise in the transport and energy sectors; it is listed on the Milan stock exchange and operates via a number of group companies and joint ventures. At September 30th 2011, the Finmeccanica Group had 71,050 employees, including 40,435 in Italy, approximately 10,600 in the US, more than 9,400 in the UK, nearly 3,700 in France, nearly 3,300 in Poland and 990 in Germany. Over 85% of the Group's employees are based in our three "domestic" markets (Italy, UK, USA). As part of its drive to maintain and build on its technological excellence, the Finmeccanica Group spends 11% of its revenues on research and development.

Sales of the AW169 helicopters are estimated at 1,000 over the next 20 years. The AW169 is scheduled to make its maiden flight next spring. The first prototype of the AW189, however, successfully completed its maiden flight on 22 December 2011. Sales of the AW189 are expected to reach around 600 in the next 20 years. These new models enable the company to compete in market segments in which it did not previously have a presence, with the objective of replicating the success of the AW139, the best-selling helicopter in its class with nearly 620 orders received to date.

AgustaWestland also has an industrial presence on the outskirts of Dallas. Near Arlington Airport is the facility for AgustaWestland's Tilt-Rotor Company, which is involved in another of AgustaWestland's significant development programmes, the tiltrotor AW609. This programme - which was wholly acquired by AgustaWestland in November 2011, on the back of its experience of working in partnership with the US company Bell Helicopter - is today being operated by Finmeccanica's AgustaWestland in its own right. An integrated team responsible for developing the aircraft - planned to be launched on the market in 2016 - is already up and running in Cascina Costa (Varese - Italy). The Tiltrotor, an aircraft that combines the benefits of a helicopter and a fixed wing aircraft, represents the highest level of technology in his sector. AgustaWestland is the only company able to offer this aircraft for civil and government roles.