

Airbus Helicopters' X³ high-speed demonstrator makes its new home at France's national Air and Space museum

LE BOURGET, France, 19 June 2014 – After opening the frontiers of flight during a record-setting test program, Airbus Helicopters' X³ is now ready for its place in history as this high-speed helicopter demonstrator is welcomed for display at the French national musée de l'Air et de l'Espace (Air and Space museum) of Paris-Le Bourget.

The X³ will be exhibited in the musée de l'Air et de l'Espace's hangar facilities at Paris-Le Bourget airport, being strategically located with other high-speed legends – Europe's supersonic Concorde jetliners.

“We welcome this illustrious addition to France's leading aviation museum, where our collection includes other historic rotorcraft from Airbus Helicopters' lineage – like the S.A. 3210-01 *Super Frelon*, which 50 years earlier set a world speed record of 350 km/hr,” explained Catherine Maunoury, CEO of the musée de l'Air et de l'Espace and twice world aerobatics champion. “The X³ continues a tradition of excellence at Airbus Helicopters, building on decades of innovation, research and development.”

Airbus Helicopters pursued the X³ development as part of self-funded company efforts to evolve rotorcraft that offer new ways to perform missions, fly faster and farther, and reduce operating and maintenance costs. The X³, known as a hybrid helicopter, demonstrated the company's high-speed, long-range, Hybrid Helicopter (H³) concept.

“It is appropriate that the X³ is joining other renowned aircraft at the Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace that have helped shape the aviation industry, especially since from its conception, it showed Airbus Helicopters' entrepreneurial drive to deliver a viable demonstrator to serve our customers' high-speed requirements,” said Airbus Helicopters Executive Vice President Global Business & Services, Dominique Maudet.

From its maiden take-off in September 2010 to its retirement in 2013, the X³ fully validated Airbus Helicopters' hybrid concept, using a pair of turboshaft engines to power both a five-blade helicopter main rotor and two propellers installed on short-span fixed wings.

During more than 155 hours logged by the aircraft in 199 flights, milestones achieved included a level flight speed of 255 knots (472 km/hr) on June 7, 2013 – surpassing previous high speeds reached by a helicopter. While exploring the full flight envelope in cruise, climb, at altitude and during descent, the X³ validated this high-speed concept's qualities – including outstanding stability, intuitive piloting characteristics, as well as low vibration levels without the need for anti-vibration systems.

The X³ also served as an ambassador of innovation during a demo tour in the U.S. in the summer of 2012 to demonstrate this advanced high-speed transportation system's unique operational capabilities for both civil and military operators. The final stop at Washington D.C., where the X³ landed on the helipad of the Pentagon, marked a symbolic moment in the X³'s frontier-pushing history. Three months later, the X³ was in the spotlight at the ILA Berlin air show where it participated in flight demonstrations and gave European aficionados an up-close look at its unique characteristics.

Airbus Helicopters foresees a wide range of potential applications for a hybrid helicopter configuration that may be developed from the X³ concept, offering an advanced, cost-effective vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) transportation system with speeds of a turboprop-powered aircraft and the full-flight capabilities of a helicopter. Its applications could include long-distance search and rescue (SAR) operations, coast guard missions, border patrol flights, passenger transport and off-shore airlift, along with inter-city shuttle services.

The combination of higher cruise speeds and excellent VTOL performance also is well-suited for military missions, such as special forces operations, troop transport, combat SAR and medical evacuation. The X³ concept is particularly well suited for missions requiring long transit flights at high speeds, while retaining full vertical lift and hover capabilities – all at a very affordable cost.

The X³ resulted from a rapid-paced program that utilized one of Airbus Helicopters' Dauphin helicopters as the airframe, providing a test platform with a maximum take-off weight of 5,200 kg. In addition to the more symbolic aspect of achieving record velocities for a rotorcraft, the X³'s flight evaluations enabled Airbus Helicopters to further explore the behavior of main rotors at high speeds, while also assessing the effectiveness in drag optimization.

About the musée de l'Air et de l'Espace

Located at Paris-Le Bourget airport, Europe's premier business aviation airport, the French Air and Space museum is one of the world's leading aviation museums. With an exceptional historic heritage, it is the only museum in the world to present the three fields of flight: ballooning, aviation and space. It has an incredible collection of more than 400 aircraft, 150 of which are on display, from the very first aeroplanes to the Breguet 19 TF "Point d'Interrogation", which made the first Paris to New-York non-stop flight and two Concorde, the first prototype and one of the aircraft from the Air France fleet. The "Rotary Wing Hall" presents the entire history of helicopter since 1907. Bridging the past and the future, the prestigious musée de l'Air et de l'Espace is a lively place, holding events throughout the year, regularly acquiring items for the collection, hosting activities for all-including Planète Pilote for children and being hired for various events and for filming. The musée de l'Air et de l'Espace is also a site museum. In fact, Le Bourget is a place that all aviation heroes have been through, including Charles Lindbergh. It is the birthplace of commercial aviation and includes buildings that are themselves of great cultural interest, like the terminal building with its Art Deco architecture. At the controls of the musée de l'Air et de l'Espace is Catherine Maunoury, twice world aerobatics champion.

<http://www.museeairespace.fr/presse/communiques-2014>

About Airbus Helicopters

Airbus Helicopters, formerly Eurocopter, is a division of Airbus Group, a global pioneer in aerospace and defense related services. Airbus Helicopters is the world's No. 1 helicopter manufacturer and employs more than 23,000 people worldwide. With 46 percent market share in civil and parapublic sectors, the company's fleet in service includes some 12,000 helicopters operated by more than 3,000 customers in approximately 150 countries. Airbus Helicopters' international presence is marked by its subsidiaries and participations in 21

countries, and its worldwide network of service centers, training facilities, distributors and certified agents. Airbus Helicopters' range of civil and military helicopters is the world's largest; its aircraft account for one third of the worldwide civil and parapublic fleet. The company's chief priority is to ensure the safe operation of its aircraft for the thousands of people who fly more than 3 million hours per year.

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