

## **International Flight Training School: first two M-346 aircraft landed into the Italian Air Force's 61st Wing Base**

**Rome, 15 February 2019** – The first two new Leonardo's M-346 aircrafts, part of the International Flight Training School (IFTTS) project, joined the other 18 Italian Air Force's M-346s at 61<sup>st</sup> Wing's base in Galatina (Lecce), in Southern Italy. The new airplanes will be used to meet the growing demand for training services at the IFTTS, established under the Leonardo-Italian Air Force Agreement signed in July 2018 and aimed at strengthening the training services delivered by the Air Force.

The Leonardo-Italian Air Force IFTTS Agreement was inspired by the common decision of these two preeminent national entities to foster synergies to the benefit of the Country: combining the capabilities of the largest Italian industrial player in the aerospace, defence and security sectors with the Air Force's expertise in the military flight training domain.

The Galatina Air Base will play a key role leveraging on its long and well-established operational expertise. The reinforcement of the 61<sup>st</sup> Wing to achieve the highest operational capability is core to the establishment of the IFTTS. This goal will be achieved starting from 2020 when the brand new integrated training system arrives in Galatina. This system is based on the M-345 HET – High Efficiency Trainer aircraft (designated T-345 by the Air Force) which will progressively replace the T-339A (used for the Phase II of training) and the T-339C (used for the Phase III).

The IFTTS will have Phase IV - Lead In to Fighter Training – LIFT - at the core of its activities before pilots move to fighters, and will enable it to also meet the demand for pilot training from foreign air forces while foreseeing a possible further expansion with another base in Italy.

The Italian Air Force's modular syllabus has already proven its effectiveness to train students to the requirements of many air forces. Many have already been trained at the 61st Wing Air Base to transition to 4th and 5th generation fighters.

Operational training, carried out by the Italian Air Force with the T-346A, prepares pilots to transition to the latest-generation combat aircraft including the Eurofighter and the F-35. The Galatina Air Force Base is also equipped with LVC (Live, Virtual and Constructive Simulation) technology including the advanced M-346 simulator, enabling trainees on the ground to interact with pilots in the air, flying real aircraft, during the same training missions.

## Note to editors

The Italian Air Force's 61st Wing provides the following flight training:

- Phase II – Primary Pilot Training, for all trainees intended to identify their future assignment to different types of aircraft (fighters, remotely piloted aircraft, rotorcraft, transport)
- Phase III – Specialized Pilot Training, involving fighter and remotely piloted aircraft pilots.
- Phase IV - Lead In to Fighter Training – LIFT, to allow transition to fighters
- Military pilots trained to become jet instructors (Pilot Instructor Training- PIT).

The 61st Wing is currently hosting crews from eight nations.

**Leonardo** has designed, manufactured and supported over 2000 trainers that have been sold to more than 40 nations. Today, the Company is the world leader in pilot training, thanks to a product range that covers the entire training syllabus: from basic, with the new M-345, to advanced and lead-in fighter training, with the M-346. The Company's range of solutions also includes a Ground Based Training System (GBTS), fully integrated with the aircraft and able to provide high quality training while improving efficiency and reducing costs. These platforms and systems allow Leonardo to offer a turnkey training solution for customers worldwide, delivering the highest quality standards at all stages of training.

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