

Leonardo and the Polish Armaments Group unveil next generation W-3 helicopter concept at MSPO 2019

Kielce, 3 September 2019 – Leonardo, through its industrial pillar in the Polish helicopter sector PZL-Świdnik, and the Polish Armaments Group, jointly with the Polish aviation industry and R&D centres, present a next generation multirole military helicopter concept based on a legacy W-3 Sokół platform at MSPO 2019.

The new concept comprises state-of-the-art technologies offered by the Polish aviation industry. In the future this solution could meet the requirements of the Polish Armed Forces for a new generation of Battlefield Support helicopters. The collaborative project oversees a major modification of the W-3 platform which is the basis of the helicopter fleet of the Polish Armed Forces. Only the latest and already tested technologies available on the market have been used for the new concept, without compromising the Polish military needs through the guarantee of shorter delivery times, high level of reliability and savings in terms of the acquisition and operating costs.

The helicopter will be equipped with new blades and main rotor and a fully digital avionics system, covering a glass cockpit, Flight Management System (FMS), Synthetic Vision System (SVS), digital maps and Terrain Avoidance Warning System (TAWS), as well as a 4-axis digital autopilot, new communication system, an Engine FADEC and Health & Usage Monitoring System (HUMS).

All of this, combined with mission equipment and additional 200 kg of useful load (owing to an increase from 6400 kg to 6600 kg MTOW) will offer remarkable improvement in terms of performance and the operational capability of the helicopter.

On display at MSPO 2019 there will be a **mock-up of the new generation W-3 concept helicopter's cockpit.** This concept further highlights the stringent global standard capabilities of the Polish aviation industry and how it can meet the battlefield demands of the Polish Armed Forces as well as the mission needs of the Polish military end-users. The type will meet latest requirements of NATO countries to remain in service for another 30 years and overcome a design generation gap between previous and latest generation systems. The venture will also see a significant technology transfer from Leonardo to PZL-Świdnik which, in turn, will enable the Polish aviation industry to further consolidate its growth domestically.

Gian Piero Cutillo, Leonardo Helicopters MD said: “A key significance in the development of the new generation W-3 concept helicopter is through the transfer of technology with a view to guarantee to clients the operational autonomy and the broadest possible involvement of Polish industry. Particularly, the major role of our long-term partner, i.e. the Polish Armaments Group and companies belonging to it, which will be involved to a high degree in all phases of the project starting with the design, through to development, and the production which will support the helicopter into the future.”

Sebastian Chwałek, Vice President of the Polish Armaments Group said: „Companies of our Group bring into the modernization project several state-of-art solutions and competencies, including among others weapon systems equipped with guided and unguided missiles and firearms. Integration of those solutions on W-3 helicopter will allow this rotorcraft to support effectively soldiers in deployment of the tasks set on them, at the same time guaranteeing to the Armed Forces permanent access to munitions that can be used also by other armies of the NATO.”

The next generation W-3 helicopter will provide the Polish Armed Forces with advanced battlefield support capabilities through a wide range of mission equipment, covering fully integrated armaments system [Air-to-Air missiles, Anti-tank missiles, 70mm rocket pods, cannon pods (12.7/20 mm), machine gun installed in a cabin] and an Integrated Defensive Aids System, an Electro Optical Surveillance System, NVG Compatibility and Head Up Display.

The helicopter will be able to perform a wide range of missions: troop transport, Special Forces insertion/extraction, CSAR, Intelligence, Surveillance and Armed Reconnaissance, MEDEVAC/CASEVAC.

Leonardo's industrial presence in Poland is mainly through its subsidiary PZL-Świdnik, a Polish helicopter manufacturer which can boast over 65 years of experience in the industry gathered during manufacturing of over 7400 helicopters for customers in over 40 countries. Owing to this, Poland is one of few countries with the capability to design, develop, manufacture and service helicopters on their own. PZL-Świdnik is a core partner of the Polish Ministry for National Defence: almost 160 PZL-Świdnik-made helicopters are in service with the Polish Armed Forces of which approximately 70 W-3 units. Almost 80% of all helicopters delivered to the Polish Armed Forces in recent years have been designed in Świdnik (SW-4 Puszczyc, W-3PL Głuszc and W-3WA Sokół, including VIP configuration for transportation of top-ranking state officials). PZL-Świdnik currently has approximately 3000 employees, including more than 650 engineers, and cooperates with over 800 Polish enterprises. Leonardo is also present in many other major military programs in Poland; this concerns M-346 Bielik trainer for the Polish Air Force or Rosomak program for the Polish Army implemented in cooperation with PGZ. Leonardo has also supplied several defence and security systems, such as the ground segment of the Italian observation satellites, COSMO-SkyMed, early warning radars and coastal surveillance systems, which greatly improve Poland's security.

Polish Armaments Group (Polska Grupa Zbrojeniowa, PGZ) is one of the largest defence corporations in Europe. It brings together more than 50 companies of key importance to the Polish defence industry: factories, maintenance facilities, and research centres. It employs more than 18 000 people and generates more than 5.5 billion PLN of annual revenue. PGZ manufactures innovative systems and solutions used by the Polish Armed Forces and allied formations.

Further information:

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