

International Flight Training School's celebrated at groundbreaking ceremony

Leonardo and the Italian Air Force start building the most advanced flight training centre - an international pilot training benchmark

Rome, 16th December 2020 – A groundbreaking ceremony for the new International Flight Training School was celebrated today at the Italian Air Force's base in Decimomannu (Sardinia – Italy). Italian Defence Undersecretary Hon. Giulio Calvisi, the Sardinian Region's Governor Hon. Christian Solinas, Italian Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Enzo Vecciarelli, Italian Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Alberto Rosso, Leonardo Chairman Luciano Carta, Leonardo CEO Alessandro Profumo and Marco Zoff, Leonardo Aircraft MD, were among the attendees.

The International Flight Training School (IFTS) is the result of a strategic collaboration between the Italian Air Force and Leonardo, which is aimed at the establishment of an advanced flight-training centre. This initiative will become an international benchmark for military pilots' training, particularly in the advanced phase of training future fighter pilots.

Luciano Carta, Chairman of Leonardo, said: "The International Flight Training School brings a very high level of technological innovation and cutting-edge training skills, which will contribute to enhancing the role of the Italian Air Force and our Company in an increasingly complex and competitive international context. For this reason, Leonardo will provide skills, technology, and innovation to support the creation of the most important training centre for military aviation, a source of pride for Italy, for Europe and for our strategic allies."

Alessandro Profumo, CEO of Leonardo, said: "The International Flight Training School is able to meet the growing demands of the Italian Air Force and partner countries for pilot training. It is a virtuous example of a synergic collaboration between the military and industry, which, in turn, generates an important return for the whole country. We've combined the Air Force's established know-how and Leonardo's excellence in military pilot integrated training systems with maximised cost-effectiveness, whilst strengthening the international role played by Leonardo as a Training Service Provider."

"Today's event, though simple and unfortunately with a limited number of authorities attending due to Covid-19, is an important step in an ambitious international initiative not only for the Italian Air Force and Leonardo but also for the entire nation", said Italian Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Alberto Rosso. "The work to build the facilities which will host a state-of-the-art advanced flight training school starts at this Airbase today. Here is where Italian military pilots, and those pilots from countries who have recognised the quality and effectiveness of our integrated training system, will be trained. An integrated training system developed for those who will fly 4th and 5th generation fighters". Gen. Rosso continued: "The Italian Air Force and Leonardo share expertise and technologies to create, in the most cost-effective way, modern professionals, able to operate and manage increasingly technological and complex aircraft. Competences, quality and long-established experience of both the Air Force and our national industry in the training sector are the best calling card for this excellent training offer."

"This is an important project with no less than 20-years of operation ahead, considering the military and industrial efforts devoted to IFTS. The partnership between the Italian Air Force, thanks to its longstanding and solid flight training expertise, and Leonardo as a leader in integrated training, provides evidence of a clear synergy between two Italian excellences. A collaboration which, on the one hand, will lead to an increase in the training offer with important local benefits in terms of job



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opportunities. On the other hand, there is the possibility for Leonardo to attract further foreign investments, strengthening the role and world leadership in this sector” said Defence Undersecretary Giulio Calvisi.

With the building of the new IFTS campus headquartered at the Decimomannu Airbase, a true flight training academy will be established. It will be able to host students, technicians, as well as leisure and sports areas, a cafeteria, and maintenance and logistics infrastructures to guarantee the readiness of a 22 M-346 (designated the T-346A by the Italian Air Force) airplane fleet. An entire building will be home to the Ground Based Training System (GBTs), with classrooms and the installation of a modern training system based on the latest generation simulation system. The construction of the IFTS facility will generate positive returns for the local economy and supply chain. Once the construction is complete, the IFTS will achieve operational readiness starting in 2022, creating significant job opportunities locally.

With the new Leonardo M-345 arriving soon at the Italian Air Force's 61st Wing Airbase in Lecce Galatina to replace gradually the T-339A and FT-339C fleets, the M-346-based training syllabus advanced phase will be moved progressively to the Decimomannu Airbase.

The Leonardo M-346 is the cornerstone of the Air Force training unit, where many pilots have been trained, not only from Italy but also from a number of other countries including: the USA, Spain, France, Austria, The Netherlands, Poland, Singapore, Argentina, Greece and Kuwait.

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