FRENCH AIR AND SPACE FORCE BUYS 22 PC-7 MKX AIRCRAFT FOR BASIC MILITARY PILOT TRAINING

News / Maintenance / Trainings, Manufacturer

The French Procurement Agency, Direction Générale de l'Armement (DGA), has selected the PC-7 MKX as the new training system for the French Air and Space Force. The fleet of 22 PC-7 MKXs will be used to provide basic training for military pilots – deliveries are scheduled for 2027. In the early days of 2025, Babcock France won the prestigious "Mentor 2" tender and a 17-year contract to provide training services based on the PC-7 MKX. Besides the 22 aircraft, the package will also include ground-based training tools to be provided partly in collaboration with French industry. Pilatus will supply simulators, computer-based training and mission planning and debriefing system equipment.

Markus Bucher, CEO of Pilatus, commented: "It's a great honor to have been selected once again by our valued customer, France, and we are very proud – thank you sincerely, France!" The PC-7 MKXs will also be equipped with a Head-Up Display, an additional feature which will enable a high degree of commonality between the PC-7 MKX and the PC-21. The newly developed, state-of-the-art Ground Based Training System, including simulators, also meets the highest requirements and

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offers cost-efficient basic training for the military pilots of the ‘Grande Nation’.”

Ioannis Papachristofilou, Vice President Government Aviation at Pilatus, stated: “The French Air and Space Force will be along the Royal Netherlands Air Force, the first two operators introducing the new PC-7 MKX into service. We are looking forward to working closely with Babcock France in the delivery and operation of the new training system, and we aim to achieve the same level of success as for the PC-21.”

PC-21 & PC-7 MKX in operation

The Armée de l’Air et de l’Espace has provided advanced military pilot training on the Pilatus PC-21 and associated training system at the Base Aérienne 709 in Cognac-Châteaubernard since 2018. Pilots now train on 26 PC-21s which were acquired in two batches. With the introduction of the PC-7 MKX for basic training, France will now make exclusive use of Pilatus trainers for all phases of military pilot training.

New smart avionics system

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The Pilatus PC-7 MKX platform features a new cockpit design based on the Garmin G3000 PRIME avionics suite. It is also equipped with a Head-Up Display. With Pilatus’ proven expertise in developing pilot training systems, the result is an exceptionally reliable and intuitive avionics system designed to provide an ideal training environment from the earliest stages of training. This co-development marks the first time Garmin has integrated its G3000 PRIME technology to enable the use of custom user-defined displays. Leveraging the strengths of both companies, the DNA of Pilatus' military pilot training philosophy has been fused with Garmin's adaptability and open system architecture expertise to produce a state-of-the-art avionics suite set to revolutionize the military training market.

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