



GREECE ORDERS EIGHT AIRBUS H215 HELICOPTERS TO COMBAT FOREST FIRES

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Airbus Helicopters signed a contract with the Hellenic Ministry of Climate Crisis and Civil Protection for the purchase of eight H215 helicopters (with an option for two additional aircraft) to support the combat of wildfires in the country following a tender conducted by the Project Preparation Facility of Growthfund (the National Fund of Greece) on behalf of the Ministry. This contract is supported by two European funds and aligns with the Ministry’s Aegis Programme aimed at enhancing the capabilities of the Civil Protection forces. The contract will be based on a “government owned contractor operated” (GO-CO) model for which Airbus Helicopters will be partnering with experienced H215 firefighting operators, Airtelis and SAF Hélicoptères, for the technical and operational support.

Panagiotis Stampoulidis, Deputy CEO of Growthfund, about the significance of the project commented: "The signing of the contract for the purchase of new H215 helicopters represents an important step in our efforts to mitigate the devastating consequences of the climate crisis in our country. This is the largest contract signed under the 'Aegis' National Programme to bolster the Civil Protection mechanism in Greece with modern equipment, and we are delighted that the Project Preparation Facility of Growthfund swiftly concluded this tender with transparency and efficiency."

Bruno Even, CEO of Airbus Helicopters stated: "Wildfires have burned on average three to five million square kilometres globally in recent years with significant environmental consequences. It is an honour to have been selected to support the combat, with our H215 helicopters, that Greek communities face every year. The H215 is used around the world for firefighting missions with its ability to drop more than four tonnes of water at a time. Relying on experienced operators, such as Airtelis and SAF Aerogroup, is exactly what the French Sécurité Civile does. Airbus Helicopters has been a long-standing provider of helicopters for essential missions in the country and together with our GO-CO partners, we are sure that the H215 will be a vital and reliable asset."

SAF Aerogroup specialises in complex helicopter operations like mountain rescue, air medical services, firefighting, and humanitarian/logistic missions, demonstrated by their 2024 H215 RescEU deployment to Greece. The group also manages high-precision lifting, maintenance, and pilot/technician training, offering comprehensive high-value air services to governmental and international organisations. Similarly, Airtelis, a French operator based in the South of France with over 60 years of experience stemming from its parent company RTE, has broadened its focus beyond power grid support to include emergency response, notably firefighting, for a wider range of national and international clients.

Airbus Helicopters has been a long-standing partner in Greece since the early 2000s in both the civil and parapublic and military sectors. The Hellenic Fire Brigade operates two Super Pumas and the Hellenic Air Force operates 12 Super Pumas. The Super Puma ecosystem in the country will benefit from the support activities and training of technicians and pilots foreseen by the contract.

The H215 is a multirole helicopter that is part of the Super Puma family with over 1,100 helicopters delivered and more than 6 million flight hours under its belt. The H215 is equipped with the H225's renowned 4-axis autopilot which enables firefighting activities to be conducted at night as well as during the day. It is deployed around the world for firefighting missions thanks to its range of around 540 NM, superior endurance of more than two hours, and its ability to transport 19 firefighters. As one of the only heavy helicopters in production that is civil certified along with its ability to be equipped with either a water bucket or a belly tank, it is the ideal complement to any country's firefighting assets.

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