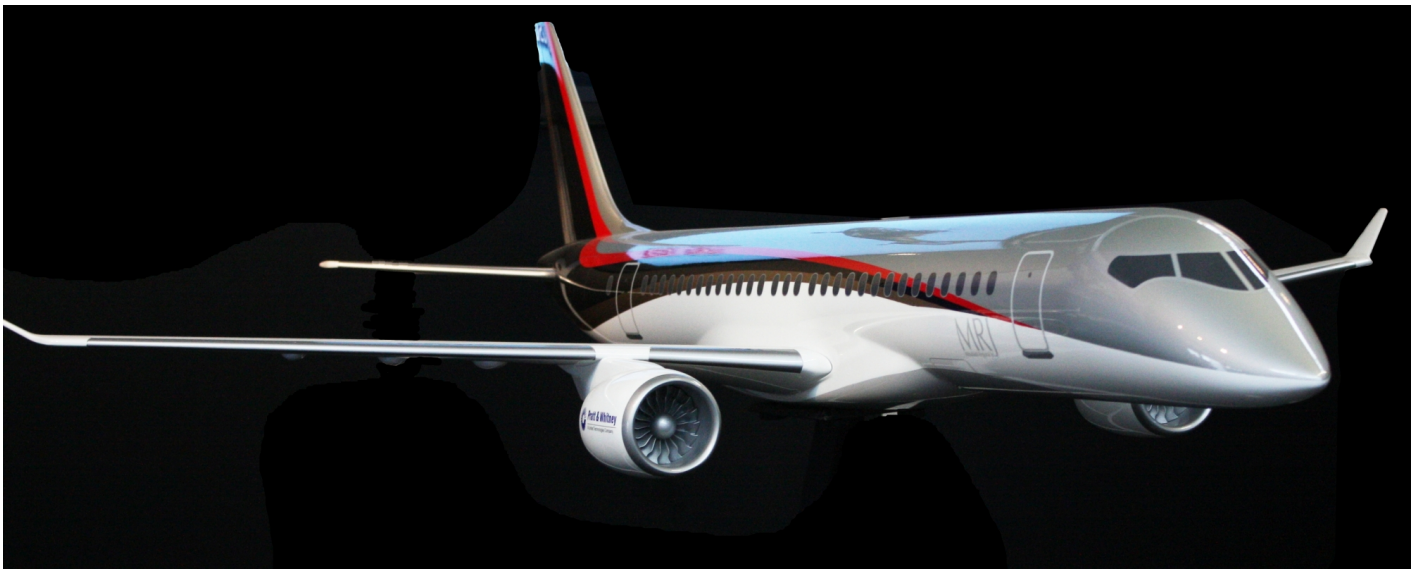
# MITSUBISHI HOPING MRJ FLIGHT KINDLES EUROPEAN INTEREST

**News / Manufacturer**



**Mitsubishi** Aircraft hopes the first flight later this month of Japan's first small passenger plane in 50 years will drive interest among prospective customers, especially in Europe, where it has yet to win any buyers.

The Mitsubishi Heavy Industries subsidiary is building the Mitsubishi Regional Jet (**MRJ**), with just under 100 seats, taking on a market served by Bombardier and Embraer.

The first flight of the jet, which was delayed from June, is planned for between October 26 and 30, with the exact date to be announced a day in advance.

"We believe in the European market, we are carefully marketing the plane," Yoshihisa Kumagai, president of Mitsubishi Aircraft Europe said.

"We hope the first flight will lead to a lot of requests from Europe," he said.

Europe is the world's second largest market for regional jets after the United States. Mitsubishi sees the MRJ as a good candidate for airlines looking to replace older fleets of turboprop planes or other regional jets such as the Avro.

In an example of carriers renewing their fleets, Irish regional carrier Cityjet announced a USD$1 billion deal on Tuesday to buy Russian-made Sukhoi Superjets to succeed its fleet of Avro RJ85 jets.

Mitsubishi currently has 223 firm orders for the MRJ, with the first delivery to Japanese carrier ANA due in the second quarter of 2017, a target confirmed by Kumagai on Wednesday.

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