



NEW AIRBUS HELICOPTER PLANT IN ROMANIA TIGHTENS EUROPEAN DEFENCE UNITY

News / Manufacturer



Airbus opened a new plant to produce the H215 helicopter in Romania on Tuesday, a €50 million (Dh206.1m) investment which the French president François Hollande said fits into efforts to promote European defence cooperation.

Speaking at a ceremony with the Romanian prime minister Dacian Cioloş in the factory in the town of Ghimbav, Mr Hollande said: "We must cooperate this way to be able to give Europe the conditions to have its European defence policy.

"Jobs that will be created here are not detrimental to French or German workers. New jobs here will lead to the creation of new jobs in France and Germany."

Germany and France have outlined plans to deepen European military cooperation as Britain's exit from the European Union removes one of the biggest obstacles to stronger EU defence in tandem with Nato.

Berlin and Paris are laying out ways for the bloc to rapidly deploy forces, with security cooperation

emerging as a unifying force for Europe after Britain's vote to leave.

The Ghimbav plant, 180km north of Bucharest, will house H215 production from procurement to after-sales, including design office activities, and will provide jobs for more than 300 employees in the long term, the company said.

A member of the Super Puma/Cougar family, the H215 is a twin-engined helicopter known for its versatility and competitive operating costs, it added.

The factory will be capable of producing up to 15 aircraft per year when reaching full capacity in 2020. Its first Romanian-made H215 helicopter is expected to roll off the assembly line in 2017, Mr Ciolos said.

A partnership between the local state-run helicopter maker IAR and Airbus dates back to 2002, when the Eurocopter Romania joint venture carrying out maintenance and repair works was set up.

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