



PRODUCTION OF EUROPE'S FIRST SIKORSKY FIREHAWK HELICOPTERS BEGINS IN POLAND

News / Manufacturer



In a milestone for European aerial firefighting and emergency response, PZL Mielec, a Lockheed Martin company, commenced production of Europe's first [Sikorsky S-70 FIREHAWK](#) helicopters. The aircraft are being manufactured for the Czech Republic Ministry of the Interior through a partnership with Česká letecká servisní (ČLS), a Helicopter Alliance (HA) company and United Rotorcraft. The FIREHAWK, a purpose-built variant of the BLACK HAWK helicopter, will enable the Czech Republic to launch rapid, all-weather suppression missions from its home base and, through the European Commission's [RescEU](#) program, extend support to neighboring nations confronting ever-intensifying wildfire seasons.

Beyond the immediate tactical benefit, the program underscores Europe's strategic move toward self-reliant, high-technology defense and civil-security capabilities. The aircraft will be a permanent asset of the RescEU pool, enabling rapid cross-border deployment whenever wildfire, flood or earthquake emergencies arise.

Dr. Dennis Goege, vice president and chief executive for Europe, Lockheed Martin commented: "This production start is more than a manufacturing milestone; it is the first concrete step toward a continent-wide, modern aerial firefighting network. By delivering proven technology from a European supply chain, we are giving European communities a decisive tool to protect lives,

property and ecosystems.”



Janusz Zakrzewski, PZL Mielec president and general director stated: “PZL Mielec has a long history of delivering aircraft that serve both national security and public safety missions. The launch of production for the Czech Republic’s FIREHAWK aircraft reinforces our role as a key European manufacturing center and highlights the growing importance of international cooperation in addressing natural disasters and emergency response challenges.”

Monika Kowalczykova, chief executive officer of Česká letecká servisní said: “The Czech Republic is not merely buying helicopters; it is pioneering Europe’s first operational FIREHAWK capability. Our partnership brings world-class, multi-mission aircraft to a region that faces increasingly severe wildfire threats, and it sets a benchmark that other European operators can follow.”

“The FIREHAWK’s proven performance in the toughest U.S. fire seasons gives us confidence that it will excel in Europe’s diverse terrain and weather,” said United Rotorcraft vice president of strategy and business development Jeanette Eaton. “We are sending a team to the Czech Republic to install the firefighting kit, water tanks and additional search-and-rescue equipment, ensuring the aircraft are mission-ready from day one.”

The program illustrates a seamless collaboration among PZL Mielec, ULS and U.S.-based United Rotorcraft, who will be expanding its capabilities into the Czech Republic. The team at PZL Mielec’s state-of-the-art facility in Poland assembles each BLACK HAWK airframe with the support of more than 1,200 local suppliers, sustaining roughly 5,000 jobs across the EU. United Rotorcraft will integrate mission-specific firefighting equipment, conduct crew training and provide long-term sustainment, ensuring that the Czech operators receive a turnkey solution that mirrors the operational maturity relied upon by U.S. agencies including CAL FIRE, the County of Los Angeles Fire Department and others. Each FIREHAWK is equipped with a 1,000-gallon (3,785L) water tank, retractable snorkel, twin engines and night-vision capability - advantages that have proven decisive in the most demanding wildfires across the United States.

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