



# SABENA TECHNICS AND THALES TO UPGRADE CN-235 AIRCRAFT FOR FRENCH AIR AND SPACE FORCE

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**As part of the modernisation of France's military air assets, the consortium formed by Sabena technics and Thales has been notified by the French defence procurement agency (DGA) to upgrade the avionics on the CN-235 aircraft operated by the French Air and Space Force.**

- The consortium formed by Sabena technics and Thales has been awarded a contract for the upgrade of the French Air and Space Force's fleet of CN-235 twin-turboprop tactical transport and logistics aircraft.
- The 27 CN-235s will be upgraded with state-of-the-art avionics to allow integration into general air traffic, significantly enhance capabilities for tactical and public service operations, increase fleet availability and extend service life to 2040 and beyond.
- The first upgraded CN-235s will begin operations with the Air and Space Force in 2027.

Philippe Rochet, Chairman, Sabena technics commented: "This major project to upgrade the avionics of the CN-235 aircraft brings the French Air and Space Force significant operational

benefits and Sabena technics is particularly proud to be taking part. The partnership with Thales is the latest illustration of our ability to work together efficiently and make the most of our complementary areas of expertise. This contract consolidates the major role that Sabena technics is playing on the CN-235 programme by combining this major modification with our work as prime contractor for through-life support."

Yannick Assouad, Executive Vice-President Avionics, Thales said: "Thanks to close cooperation between the DGA, Air and Space Force, Sabena technics and Thales teams, the upgrade of the CN-235 avionics will give French forces a new technological edge. The enhanced capabilities, higher fleet availability and a lifetime extension beyond 2040 will bring real operational benefits to the French armed forces."

The CN-235 is used for tactical missions to drop paratroopers or equipment and for public service operations such as medical evacuation and can be deployed rapidly into theatres of operations. The CN-235's new state-of-the-art and intuitive avionics will meet the standards of the Single European Sky and enable French forces to integrate into non-segregated airspace with no restrictions and conduct their missions quickly and efficiently. The improved reliability of the new equipment suite will also improve fleet availability and extend the service life of the aircraft.

The complementary expertise of Thales and Sabena technics enable the consortium to provide an effective response to the requirements of tactical operations today. As consortium leader, Sabena technics will perform the mechanical and electrical modifications and integrate the avionics equipment. In addition to supplying the [TopStarC](#) GPS receiver and inertial navigation system, Thales will also provide latest-generation avionics derived from its TopDeck suite used on the ATR 72-600 commercial passenger aircraft. TopDeck is certified and flight-proven on nearly 800 civil and military platforms. Its simple and intuitive interface reduces pilot workload, enabling air crews to focus on their core tasks. The upgraded CN-235s will also feature the latest-generation Thales radio altimeter, which is immune to 5G interference, to ensure safe, high-performance navigation.

Thales facilities in Bordeaux, Brive, Châtelleraut, Toulouse, Valence and Vendôme, and the Sabena technics site in Dinard, will be involved in the upgrade of the French Air and Space Force's CN-235 fleet.

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