AIRBUS HELICOPTERS BEGINS TESTS OF FIRE-DETECTION SYSTEM FOR GERMANY

News / Manufacturer

Airbus Helicopters has begun test flights for its German armed forces customer as part of a research and technology programme to develop a hostile fire indication (HFI) system.

Using a modified German army Sikorsky CH-53G helicopter, the manufacturer performed the first evaluation sortie on 30 March, from Manching, to study the integration and effects on handling qualities of a number of sensors.

The aim of the project is to demonstrate the ability of different technologies to detect infantry gunfire using 5.56mm or 20mm rounds and even non-tracer ammunition.

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Airbus Helicopters

During the initial study phase, the rotorcraft has been equipped with acoustic and infrared sensors to detect and pinpoint the hostile fire based on sound and muzzle flashes.

A radar, which will be installed for a later stage of testing, will be able to perceive any “bullet-sized objects” fired at the helicopter, says Airbus Helicopters.

“The HFI study aims to demonstrate a technology that not only warns the aircrew about the threat in order to be able to redirect other aircraft from the danger zone, it should also report the precise position of the enemy infantry for fast countermeasures,” says Dr Klaus Przemeck, head of the military support centre at Airbus Helicopters Germany.

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Airbus Helicopters

Firing tests are due to take place towards the end of 2016 at the German armed forces' weapons and ammunition establishment in Meppen, in the north of the country. Two further evaluations are scheduled for 2017, with the results due by the end of next year.

Airbus Helicopters heads a consortium of companies involved in the project and including Airbus Defence & Space, Rheinmetall Defence and Fraunhofer FKIE.

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