



KOPTER SH09 HELICOPTER TEST FLIGHTS GO AHEAD IN SICILY

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The flight test activities of the third prototype of the SH09 single-engine helicopter have restarted in Pozzallo, Sicily, in Italy last week. The Kopter flight test & prototype maintenance teams arrived in Pozzallo earlier this month to prepare P3 and perform all necessary technical checks to resume the flight tests that had been halted since the 10th of March due to the Covid-19 situation. Richard Grant, Kopter Chief Test Pilot, commented: “We are very pleased to be back in Pozzallo to resume our work on P3. The first few flights have been used to re-familiarise ourselves with the operation and to complete some essential training for flight crew and ground staff; there has even been the opportunity to train new team members. Good progress has been made and we are ready to restart our experimental flights”.

The new flight testing activities are to further assess the benefits provided by the new main rotor configuration. Since January 2020, P3 has been flying with a modified main rotor head and next generation rotor blades, optimising the dynamic behaviour of the helicopter and further reducing the pilot workload in all phases of flight. In the forthcoming months, additional advancements in the programme will also be tested on P3, a new tail rotor hub design, currently being bench-tested in Ennetmoos (Switzerland), the Garmin avionics suite

G3000H, a new aerodynamics package for the Tail Plane, vertical fin and upper cowlings, extensively validated through CFD analysis and Wind Tunnel testing and the final main rotor configuration with the latest blades and revised flight controls.

During the three-month period without flying, Kopter has continued to maintain a good level of operational activities, while ensuring the health and safety of its staff at all times. Kopter has been able to leverage its extensive digital approach to operations and organisation of work to easily implement efficient home office solutions. A close collaboration with partners and suppliers have allowed the progress, under the restrictions in place, of the SH09's development and industrialisation processes. Engineering teams continued the design activities for the upcoming P3 upgrades and for the PS4 (Pre-Series 4) configuration definition, while the Operations and Procurement teams continued to ensure the delivery of parts for both aircraft.

Under the ongoing integration process with Leonardo, Kopter is already benefitting from complementary skills, resources and tools at all levels, greatly supporting the SH09 programme development and production of parts. The SH09 is a real game changer addressing evolving needs and delivering more capabilities at competitive costs. The end-to-end digitalisation of the SH09 programme will be a key enabler.

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