

LEONARDO DELIVERS HH-139B HELICOPTER TO THE ITALIAN AIR FORCE

News / Manufacturer



Italian Minister of Defence Lorenzo Guerini and Italian Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Alberto Rosso attended the acceptance ceremony of an Italian Air Force HH-139B helicopter during an official visit to Leonardo's helicopter facility in Vergiate (Italy). Leonardo CEO Alessandro Profumo, Leonardo General Manager Lucio Valerio Cioffi, and Leonardo Helicopters' MD Gian Piero Cutillo were also in attendance. During the visit to the facility, the Authorities were shown the Company's industrial capabilities, products and advanced technologies, which are fully representative of Leonardo's leadership in the vertical flight domain and preserve in-country strategic technological capabilities.

The HH-139B is a dedicated Air Force variant of the AW139 type. The aircraft will be used for a wide range of missions including SAR – Search and Rescue, fire-fighting, Slow Mover Interceptor.

Italian Minister of Defence Lorenzo Guerini said: ““National sovereignty, from a military and technological point of view, is preserved today also thanks to this level of excellence and to the synergies among institutions, Defence and industry. Italy has prime industrial capabilities and Leonardo symbolises a nation, which can leverage a top world-class Aerospace, Defence and Security industry.”

Alessandro Profumo, CEO of Leonardo, said: “We are proud to provide our capability so that the Italian Air Force’s major duties such as supporting the national community and homeland security are guaranteed. The HH-139B is an iconic product fully representative of national industry’s technology excellence and international competitiveness. The facility in Vergiate - the largest Leonardo helicopter final assembly line with more than 1,000 employees - shows outstanding rotorcraft capabilities in terms of products, manufacturing processes, and professional skills, and is able to maintain Leonardo and Italy at the forefront of innovation in an increasingly strategic and highly competitive sector.”

Over 1,200 AW139s have been sold to more than 280 customers in over 70 countries, including more than 80 for Italian government operators (Air Force, Guardia di Finanza, State Police, Coast Guard, National Firefighting Department and Carabinieri), plus emergency medical service operators. This helicopter model benefits from advanced digital technology solutions, for both flight and missions as well as training (pilots and maintenance technicians) and support. The helicopter’s state-of-the-art satellite navigation and synthetic vision system has 3D representations of the external environment on cockpit displays even in poor visibility conditions, advanced collision avoidance and proximity systems, mission sensors and an automatic flight control system, which is able to assist the crew during SAR and hoisting in harsh environmental and weather conditions. The AW139 also features modern predictive maintenance and diagnostics solutions allowing accurate, rapid assessment and data processing on the health and usage of aircraft components. This allows more efficient maintenance activities increasing operational effectiveness and safety. Both flight and maintenance training are extensively delivered in virtual environments and simulation. Crews can therefore maximise their ability to use equipment and leverage the best performance of the product during missions. Maintenance technicians can leverage virtual training therefore increasing technical assistance quality and reliability. All of these capabilities bring greater safety to operations.

The majority of Leonardo helicopters that are manufactured, and the largest number of its helicopter types in the product portfolio, are assembled at Vergiate facility. Components from Leonardo’s Centres of Excellence in Italy and abroad (airframes, dynamics, avionics, equipment), in addition to the wider supply chain, are gathered and then enter the production process to build the complete helicopter. This is customised, tested, and delivered to Italian and international customers. A major logistics centre is also based in Vergiate for spare parts storage and management and for technical support assisting Leonardo’s helicopter global fleet, which comprise more than 5,000 units that are used by over 1,200 operators in more than 150 countries.

26 JUNE 2021

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