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MBDA to develop the combat missile for the Tiger helicopter

Bourges, 13 November 2020:

French Minister for the Armed Forces Florence Parly has announced that MBDA is to develop the Future Tactical Air-to-Surface Missile (MAST-F) program as the main French Army air to ground armament for the Tiger combat helicopter.

MBDA was selected after proposing to the Direction Générale de l'Armement (DGA - French Procurement Agency) its MHT/MLP concept (Missile Haut de Trame / Missile Longue Portée - high tier missile / long-range mobile missile) that builds on the technologies of the mid-range MMP, the first 5th generation land combat missile to enter service around the world. Its modular architecture enables easy integration of the MHT/MLP onto a variety of land or air combat platforms in addition to the Tiger.

The MHT/MLP is characterised by its high operational effectiveness. Weighing 20% less than other missiles in its category provides a weight saving of nearly 100 kg for the Tiger helicopter, which can carry up to eight missiles in combat configuration. Exploiting this weight saving increases the Tiger's fuel capacity and so its combat endurance, with a significant gain in "Playtime".

The MHT/MLP has a range of over 8 km, even when fired from a stationary platform at low altitude. Its multi-effect warhead can handle a wide variety of targets, from modern battle tanks to hardened combat infrastructure. The MHT/MLP performs day or night, including in beyond-line-of-sight (BLOS) mode, with a two-way data link that sends images from the missile's high-resolution visible and infrared optronic seeker back to the operator. The crew of the Tiger can use this imagery to choose the missile's point of impact or to select a new target in flight, making the weapon suitable for fluid battlefield situations.

Commenting on the launch of the programme, MBDA CEO Eric Béranger declared: “The MHT/MLP missile combines new technologies, developed with the support of the DGA, with the tried and tested components of the MMP, making it an effector at the forefront of today’s tactical land combat missiles. It offers a flexibility of use unmatched in today's armed forces, while minimising development risks. And with its all-European design authority, the MHT/MLP programme will fully contribute to the strategic autonomy objectives set by France and the European Union.”

"With nearly 350 jobs per year over the next five years and, ultimately, around 250 annual jobs in France during the first 10 years of its production, the development and production of this new missile will help maintain of the national industrial and technological base, and in particular in the Centre region", he added.

Notes to editors:

MBDA is the only European group capable of designing and producing missiles and missile systems that correspond to the full range of current and future operational needs of the three armed forces (land, sea and air).

With a significant presence in five European countries and within the USA, in 2019 MBDA achieved revenue of 3.7 billion euros with an order book of 17.5 billion euros. In total, the group offers a range of 45 missile systems and countermeasures products already in operational service and more than 15 others currently in development.

MBDA is jointly owned by Airbus (37.5%), BAE Systems (37.5%), and Leonardo (25%).

Press contacts:

Jean Dupont

Tel : +33 (0)1 71 54 11 73

Mobile : +33 (0)6 33 37 64 66

jean.dupont@mbda-systems.com

Clémence Giraudeau

Tel : +33 (0)1 71 54 12 69

Mobile : +33 (0)6 33 39 89 27

clemence.giraudeau@mbda-systems.com