

25th November 2010

## **MBDA's Aster, the first European missile to successfully carry out a ballistic intercept**

MBDA is celebrating the total success of an Aster missile firing carried out on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2010 by the DGA EM (Direction Générale de l'Armement - Essais de Missiles) in the Landes region of France. This firing deployed the Aster 30 Block 1 missile variant developed for the French Air Force's Mamba medium range air defence system (also known as SAMP/T or Surface Air Moyenne Portée Terrestre) and optimised for the interception of aerial as well as ballistic threats.

The Aster missile family (which also includes the naval variants Aster 15 and Aster 30) constitutes the most important missile programme ever launched in Europe and the second largest defence programme managed by OCCAR after the A400M tactical transport aircraft. Having been taken up by three European countries and two export countries, today, the Aster family offers the largest installed base of European missile systems. The MBDA/Thales order book for this system includes a total of 55 naval and ground-based systems and more than 1,700 missiles scheduled for delivery.

Aster-based systems are operational today in ground or naval configurations for missions associated with the self-defence of aircraft carriers, self, local and fleet area defence when deployed from frigates and destroyers, ground-based area defence as well as the anti-air protection of deployed and projected forces.

The Aster missile is differentiated from all other current and future global products by its unequalled flexibility which enables it to counter saturating attack scenarios against low radar signature targets with the same probability of success whether at low or high altitude. Thanks to this flexibility, the system is equally relevant in defeating the traditional aerial threat as it is in countering more recent scenarios associated with asymmetric warfare or force projection.

In the Aster 30 Block 1 version, which today equips SAMP/T, the missile is capable of intercepting ballistic missiles of the 600km class, the class which constitute the main current threat. Incremental evolutions of the missile have already been proposed to counter the proliferating and growing global ballistic threat. These evolutions will be transferable to all systems currently deploying Aster 30.

"This is a historic event because Europe has just demonstrated that it knows how to achieve totally independently a defence capability against the theatre ballistic missile threat", stated Antoine Bouvier, Chief Executive Officer of MBDA. "This success further confirms the option offered by MBDA and its partners, Thales and Safran, to incrementally evolve SAMP/T and Aster in order to face the evolving ballistic threat and to respond to the issue of European sovereignty".

### **Notes to editors**

With industrial facilities in four European countries and within the USA, MBDA has an annual turnover of €2.6 billion and an order book of €12 billion. With more than 90 armed forces customers in the world, MBDA is a world leader in missiles and missile systems.

MBDA is the only 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). 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 held by BAE SYSTEMS (37,5%), EADS (37,5%) and FINMECCANICA (25%).

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