Airbus unveils next generation rotorcraft concepts for NATO studies

Marignane, France, 23 February 2026 - Airbus Helicopters has unveiled its next generation rotorcraft concepts to address the NATO Next Generation Rotorcraft Capabilities (NGRC) study requirements.

Airbus' proposal to NATO, developed in collaboration with RTX businesses Collins Aerospace and Raytheon, and MBDA, includes two concepts: a high-performance conventional helicopter alongside a novel high-speed compound concept, ensuring operational efficiency and fleet complementarity for military partners. Modularity and simplicity are core tenets of the Airbus NGRC proposal. The design philosophy aims to deliver platforms that are simple to manufacture, maintain, and upgrade, ensuring long-term affordability, thanks to its Modular Open System Architecture approach. The two concepts will be highly connected and will share commonalities in terms of maintenance, training, weapons and systems.

"We want to ensure that Europe is in a position to propose a platform that will best fit our military partners' needs in terms of affordability, operational efficiency and maximum availability for both the conventional helicopter and for the high speed rotorcraft. These two concepts are a basis to further exchange with our military partners on their vision and need for future military operations," said Bruno Even, CEO of Airbus Helicopters. "Airbus Helicopters is actively working on the future of its military range. On the one hand, we are preparing the evolution of our legacy range with a continuous improvement policy. With the Block 1 and 2 studies, we have a long-term NH90 evolution roadmap. Our dual product range, the H145M, the H160M, and the H225M, is setting new standards for military helicopters in terms of affordability, connectivity, and maintenance," he explained. "On the other hand, we are working on the next generation of rotorcraft systems, leveraging modular multi-platform technologies such as connectivity, cybersecurity, crewed-uncrewed teaming, multi-domain collaborative combat, survivability and battle damage repair," he added.

In July 2024, the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) awarded a contract to Airbus Helicopters to lead a concept study in the frame of the NGRC project under which the participants combined efforts to work on the design, development, delivery and support of a medium multi-role helicopter.

Airbus' advanced concept leverages the company's extensive experience in military rotorcraft and high-speed flight, particularly from its compound configuration demonstrators, the X3 and Racer, This configuration not only guarantees significantly higher speeds than conventional designs but also provides a significant extension of the flight envelope, offering unique capacity to accelerate and decelerate rapidly, as well as enabling fast climb and

descent capabilities. The benefits of the added wings and propellers have been confirmed through flight evaluations by military pilots on Racer in the frame of the European Next Generation Rotorcraft Technologies programme. This extensive flight-test knowledge, based on Airbus customers' operational feedback, solidifies the basis for the proposed next generation capability.

@AirbusHeli #NGRC

Newsroom

Contacts for the media

Laurence Petiard
Helicopters
+33 6 18 79 75 69
laurence.petiard@airbus.com

Emmanuel Huberdeau
Helicopters
+33 6 17 27 93 31
emmanuel.huberdeau@airbus.com