

Airbus is preparing two uncrewed combat aircraft from Kratos for first flight with a European mission system

Brussels, Belgium, 13 March 2026 – Airbus is working at full throttle to offer the German Air Force an operational Uncrewed Collaborative Combat Aircraft (UCCA) system by 2029. In Manching, near Munich, the company is currently preparing the first two Valkyries it acquired from its US partner Kratos Defense & Security Solutions, Inc. (NASDAQ: KTOS) for their maiden flight with a sovereign European mission system. They are scheduled to fly later this year. The two companies are bringing their respective industry-leading capabilities to integrate, missionise, and ultimately produce and deliver the Airbus UCCA system.

Airbus is currently equipping the UCCAs with its sovereign European mission system, the Multiplatform Autonomous Reconfigurable and Secure (MARS) system. MARS also contains an AI-supported software brain called MindShare which not only replaces the missing pilot, but is also capable of coordinating entire mission groups by being distributed across many manned and uncrewed platforms.

“By combining the Kratos Valkyrie with our MARS mission system, we are offering the German customer exactly what Germany and Europe urgently need in the current geopolitical situation: a proven flying uncrewed combat aircraft with a sovereign European mission system that does not have to be developed from scratch in a time-consuming and costly manner,” said Marco Gumbrecht, Head of Key Account Germany at Airbus Defence and Space. “Our objective is to deliver credible combat capability in time of relevance, while assuring key sovereign aspects. And we are confident that we can do this at a very affordable price - which is a key driver for UCCAs.”

Steve Fendley, President of Kratos Unmanned Systems Division, said, “We couldn’t be more excited about the opportunity, the capability we’re providing, and the teaming relationship with Airbus. By taking the flight-proven and in-production Valkyrie and integrating the Airbus MARS mission system, the Airbus-missionised Valkyrie UCCA is a multi-mission, affordable system that can operate independently, in teams of UAS, or in Manned-Unmanned-Teaming operations. Along with the technical and production backing Airbus and Kratos bring, we are realising an optimal capability system that can be bought and deployed as ‘affordable mass’; the consistent discriminator identified in today’s peer to peer wargames.”

To enable the Eurofighter to act as a “command aircraft” with cross-platform connectivity performance, Airbus and Rafael are enhancing the Litening 5 Advanced Targeting Pod, already contracted for the Eurofighter fleet, with a connectivity capability. Along with minor updates to the Eurofighter’s avionics, these enhancements will significantly increase the aircraft’s lethality in combat.

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Key technical data and areas of operation

The Kratos Valkyrie has a length of 9.1 m, a wingspan of 8.2 m, and a range of over 5,000 kilometres. The maximum take-off weight (MTOW) is around three tons. It can fly at an altitude of up to 45,000 feet. The maiden flight of the Valkyrie already took place in the USA in 2019; and additional aircraft have been flying regularly since that time. The maiden flight of the Airbus variant is scheduled for 2026.

Fully autonomous or commanded by a Eurofighter, the Valkyrie will be able to take on sensitive mission tasks that would pose too great a danger to the pilot. The UCCA can service kinetic and non-kinetic mission sets in several roles. For the German customer, Airbus and Kratos are initially focusing on a specific role to deliver credible combat air power on time and on target.



In Manching, Germany, Airbus is currently preparing two Valkyries for their first flight with its European mission system. The picture shows one of them.

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