

Successful first demo flight: Airbus' uncrewed Bird of Prey interceptor autonomously engages kamikaze drone with Frankenburg missile

Munich, Germany, 30 March 2026 – The Airbus 'Bird of Prey' interceptor drone successfully completed its first demonstration flight at a military training area in northern Germany. In a realistic mission scenario, it autonomously searched, detected and classified a medium-sized one-way attack (kamikaze) drone. After successful identification, the Bird of Prey interceptor engaged the target with a Mark I air-to-air missile developed by defence tech start-up partner Frankenburg Technologies.

"Against the current geopolitical and military backdrop, defending against kamikaze drones is a tactical priority that urgently needs to be tackled," said Mike Schoellhorn, CEO Airbus Defence and Space. "With our Bird of Prey and Frankenburg's affordable Mark I missiles, we are providing armed forces with an effective, cost-efficient interceptor, filling a crucial capability gap in today's asymmetric conflict theatres. The integration of Bird of Prey into Airbus' air defence battle management suite IBMS acts as a force multiplier."

"This is a defining step for modern air defence," said Kusti Salm, CEO of Frankenburg Technologies. "Together with Airbus, it marks the first integration of a new class of low-cost, mass-manufacturable interceptor missiles onto a drone, creating a new cost curve for air defence and enabling defence against mass aerial threats at a fundamentally different scale."

The demonstration flight took place just nine months after the project started. Based on a modified Airbus Do-DT25 drone, the Bird of Prey prototype used in the flight features a wingspan of 2.5 metres, a length of 3.1 metres, and a maximum take-off weight of 160 kg. While the prototype was equipped with four Mark I air-to-air missiles, the operational version will be able to carry up to eight of them. The high-subsonic, fire-and-forget missiles have an engagement range of up to 1.5 kilometres, measure 65 centimetres in length and weigh less than 2 kg each, making them the lightest guided interceptors developed to date. They are equipped with a fragmentation warhead designed to neutralise targets at short proximity. This will enable the reusable Bird of Prey to engage and neutralise multiple kamikaze drones per mission, at a comparably low cost per kill.

Bird of Prey is designed to seamlessly operate within NATO's integrated air defence architecture via established command and control systems centred around Airbus' Integrated Battle Management System (IBMS). Consequently, the counter UAS (Uncrewed Aerial System) solution Bird of Prey can be an essential, highly mobile and complementary building block of any integrated and layered air and missile defence solution.

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Airbus and Frankenburg plan to conduct additional flights with a live warhead throughout 2026 to further operationalise the system and demonstrate its full capabilities to interested potential customers.

Video and image footage of the demonstration flight is available [here](#).



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