

## **Eurocopter's X3 high-speed hybrid helicopter**

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Eurocopter has begun test flights of the X3 demonstrator for its innovative High-speed, long-range Hybrid Helicopter (H3) concept, which combines excellent vertical takeoff and landing capabilities with fast cruise speeds of more than 220 kts.

The X3 demonstrator is equipped with two turboshaft engines that power a five-blade main rotor system and two propellers installed on short-span fixed wings. This creates an advanced transportation system offering the speed of a turboprop-powered aircraft and the full hover flight capabilities of a helicopter. The concept is tailored to applications where operational costs, flight duration and mission success depend directly on the maximum cruising speed.

A wide range of utilizations are envisaged for the H3 configuration, including long-distance search and rescue (SAR) missions, coast guard duties, border patrol missions, passenger transport and inter-city shuttle services. It also may be well-suited for military missions in special forces operations, troop transport, combat SAR and medical evacuation - benefitting from the hybrid aircraft's combination of higher cruise speeds with excellent vertical takeoff/landing performance.

"Innovation is at the core of Eurocopter's strategy to continue its leadership in the global helicopter sector, and the X3 demonstrator represents a key element of our innovation roadmap," said Lutz Bertling, Eurocopter's President & CEO. "The teams at Eurocopter took this hybrid helicopter from concept to first flight in less than three years, which demonstrates their skills, capabilities and dedication to defining the future of rotary-wing aircraft."

The X3 demonstrator's first flight occurred September 6 in southern France at the Istres Center of "DGA Flight Testing", which is operated by the French DGA government agency and ensures a secure and controlled environment. Initial testing will continue through December with reduced power, progressively opening the flight envelope to speeds of approximately 180 kts. After a three-month upgrade, X3 flights will resume in March 2011 with the goal of reaching sustained cruise speeds in excess of 220 kts.

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