

Press Release

Future Combat Air System: Airbus and Fraunhofer FKIE create expert panel on the responsible use of new technologies

@AirbusDefence @Fraunhofer_FKIE #FCAS #DefenceMatters

Munich, 14 May 2020 – In the frame of the Future Combat Air System (FCAS), Airbus (stock exchange symbol: AIR) and Bonn, Germany-based Fraunhofer Institute for Communication, Information Processing and Ergonomics FKIE have created an independent panel of experts on the responsible use of new technologies to define and propose ethical as well as international legal “guard rails” for Europe’s largest defence project.

The expert panel, which was first initiated in Germany in 2019, currently includes stakeholders such as the German Ministry of Defence, German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, foundations, universities as well as think tanks.

“In many ways, FCAS represents a giant leap forward. Not only is it Europe’s largest defence programme in the coming decades, which will foster collaboration across our partner nations. With FCAS we’ll be significantly stepping up our game in terms of new technologies which will form part of this sixth-generation ‘System of Systems’”, said Dirk Hoke, Chief Executive Officer of Airbus Defence and Space. “This opens up new opportunities in terms of security policy and helps to strengthen Europe’s role in the world. But there are also ethical and legal challenges which we have to address.”

The FCAS programme reflects a complex and extensive networked “System of Systems”, of which a next generation manned fighter will represent one key element. Such manned platforms will team with unmanned ones, called “remote carriers”, which will be providing additional capabilities to complete the missions at stake. Scalable and interoperable system architectures will allow upgraded existing platforms to be integrated into FCAS. Leveraging the collaborative capabilities of manned and unmanned platforms will require an “Air Combat Cloud” fusing in real time massive amounts of data augmented by warfare analytics and artificial intelligence. Furthermore, it is expected that the technologies developed in the frame of this project will also have significant beneficial spill-over effects for future civil applications.

Professor Reimund Neugebauer, President of Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft e. V., added: “FCAS is the largest and most technologically ambitious European defense program ever. One essential question we’re trying to tackle with this panel is how we can ensure that, on the one hand, such a system meets the necessary mission requirements of the 21st century on a global scale, while, on the other hand, ensuring full human control of such a system at all times and under all circumstances. For the first time in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany, a major defense policy project is accompanied from the start by the intellectual struggle for the technical implementation of basic ethical and legal principles – “ethical and legal compliance by design”.”

In order to create the greatest possible transparency over the proceedings of the expert panel, a website was established: www.fcas-forum.eu. All panel members make their contribution free of charge and are solely committed to their conscience.

Press Release

An interview by Dirk Hoke and Professor Reimund Neugebauer further outlining the panel's purpose and partnership can be read here: <http://www.fcas-forum.eu/en/interview>.

In order to reflect the European nature of the FCAS programme, it is foreseen in due course to broaden the panel to further participating nations.

* * *

About Airbus

Airbus is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2019, it generated revenues of € 70 billion and employed a workforce of around 135,000. Airbus offers the most comprehensive range of passenger airliners. Airbus is also a European leader providing tanker, combat, transport and mission aircraft, as well as one of the world's leading space companies. In helicopters, Airbus provides the most efficient civil and military rotorcraft solutions worldwide.

About Fraunhofer

The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, headquartered in Germany, is the world's leading applied research organization. With its focus on developing key technologies that are vital for the future and enabling the commercial exploitation of this work by business and industry, Fraunhofer plays a central role in the innovation process. As a pioneer and catalyst for groundbreaking developments and scientific excellence, Fraunhofer helps shape society now and in the future. Founded in 1949, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft currently operates 74 institutes and research institutions throughout Germany. The majority of the organization's 28,000 employees are qualified scientists and engineers, who work with an annual research budget of 2.8 billion euros. Of this sum, 2.3 billion euros is generated through contract research.

Media contacts

Martin AGÜERA	martin.agueera@airbus.com	+49 89 3179 3093
David FLOETNER	david.floetner@airbus.com	+49 89 3179 2768
Anne Rindt	anne.rindt@fkie.fraunhofer.de	+49 228 9435 734

This and other press releases and high resolution photos are available on: [AirbusMedia](#)