

Photo Release

Military Aircraft

Airbus A400M performs first helicopter air-to-air dry contacts



Getafe, 24 September 2019 – The Airbus A400M new generation airlifter has successfully achieved its first helicopter air-to-air refueling contacts with an H225M. Over the course of 4 flights, operated in day conditions over the south of France, the A400M performed 51 dry contacts marking a decisive milestone towards its full capability as a tanker. These tests were performed under the coordination of the French “DGA Essais en vol” flight test centre.

The tests, involving no fuel and performed between 1,000 ft and 10,000 ft at flight speeds as low as 105 knots, confirmed the positive results of previous proximity flights conducted at the beginning of 2019. The next step in the flight test program will involve wet contact operations scheduled to take place before the end of 2019 ahead of final certification in 2021.

The flight test campaign also included the first proximity trials between the A400M and an H160 helicopter requested by the French Defence Procurement Agency (DGA) in the frame

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of the feasibility study for the Guépard (future military multirole helicopter for the French armed forces). Tests were performed successfully.

The photo above shows the A400M performing dry contacts with an H225M operated by Airbus Helicopters.

To download footage and images of this flight test click [here](#).

A400M as a tanker

The A400M is certified to be quickly configured as a tanker, not requiring a dedicated aircraft version. The A400M carries up to 50.8 tonnes (111,600 lb) of fuel in its wings and centre wing box, without compromising any cargo hold area. Two additional cargo hold tanks can also be installed, providing an additional 5.7 tonnes (11,400 lb) of fuel each. The fuel carried in the extra tanks can be of a different nature to the fuel in the main tanks. This enables the A400M to cater for the needs of different types of receiver aircraft.

As a tanker, the A400M has already demonstrated its ability to refuel fighter receivers such as Eurofighter, Rafale, Tornado or F/A-18 at their preferred speeds and altitudes, and is also able to refuel other large aircraft such as another A400M for buddy refueling, C295 or C-130.

Helicopter air-to-air refuelling is a military tactical operation that involves low speeds and low altitudes. After this achievement and its final certification the A400M will become one of the few tanker aircraft in the world capable of performing such an operation.

About Airbus

Airbus is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2018 it generated revenues of € 64 billion and employed a workforce of around 134,000. 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

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