

## Airbus Helicopters to expand unmanned aerial system portfolio with acquisition of Aerovel

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**Marignane, 15 January 2024** - Airbus Helicopters and Aerovel have signed an agreement regarding the acquisition of Aerovel and its unmanned aerial system (UAS), Flexrotor, as part of a strategy to strengthen its portfolio of tactical unmanned solutions. Flexrotor is a small tactical unmanned aerial system designed for intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) missions at sea and over land.

"We are looking forward to welcoming Aerovel into the Airbus family. This strategic acquisition aligns with our vision to expand our UAS offering and respond to a growing customer demand worldwide for additional mission capabilities such as manned-unmanned teaming. Aerovel's expertise in autonomous flight technology will undoubtedly complement our UAS development with the VSR700, as well as the work that we have been doing to develop interoperability," said Bruno Even, CEO of Airbus Helicopters.

"Joining forces with Airbus will allow us to scale innovation, accelerate our mission to advance unmanned aviation, and maintain our unwavering support for the US military and its allies. We are proud to become part of an organisation with a rich legacy of aerospace excellence and we look forward to leveraging our combined strengths to define the future of autonomous systems. It will also be a great tribute to our Founder and Chief Technology Officer, Tad McGeer, who has spent the last 30 years committed to delivering innovative unmanned products," said Ali Dian, CEO of Aerovel.

The Flexrotor, a modern Vertical Takeoff and Landing (VTOL) Unmanned Aircraft with a maximum launch weight of 25 kg, has been designed for ISTAR missions for more than 12-14 hours in a typical operational configuration. It can integrate different types of payloads including an electro-optical system and advanced sensors to suit customers' unique mission needs. With the ability to autonomously launch and recover from either land or sea requiring only a 12 by 12 ft. area for launch and recovery, the Flexrotor is ideal for expeditionary missions requiring minimal footprint. Through the support of the US Department of Defense (DoD), and contracted deployment in a variety of maritime security exercises, the Flexrotor is

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a mission-proven, force multiplier for operations in harsh, high-threat, GPS-denied environments. The Flexrotor can also be used for parapublic missions such as forest fire surveillance (providing firefighters with critical images day or night) and ice navigation (helping guide naval vessels through ice in the Arctic ocean).

Aerovel, based in Bingen, Washington, will remain a US-owned company and continue collaboration with the US DoD under Airbus' Special Security Agreement (SSA).

The acquisition has been approved by the relevant bodies of both companies. It remains subject to regulatory approvals, as well as other customary conditions. Transaction closing is expected in 2024.



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