

Airbus Helicopters delivers first AS565 MBe Panther to the Mexican Navy

- With more than ten years' experience of flying the Panther, the Mexican Navy is the launch customer for the upgraded AS565 MBe variant.
- More powerful and efficient in hot & high environments, the new version is also safer, more cost-effective and easier to maintain.

Marignane, September 29, 2016 – The Mexican Navy yesterday took delivery of the first of the ten AS565 MBe Panther helicopters it purchased in 2014, becoming the first customer in the world to receive the new version of this multi-role, medium-class military rotorcraft. The Navy will receive three other units before the end of the year and the remaining six by early 2018.

The helicopters will be operated by the Naval Aviation in the Gulf of Mexico and on the Pacific coast, where they will perform a range of missions including Search and Rescue (SAR), disaster relief transportation and evacuation, drug enforcement and coastal protection.

The AS565 MBe combines new and proven technologies to offer more value to operators. It is equipped with two Safran Arriel 2N engines, which enhance its performance in hot & high conditions and enable it to achieve a top speed of 278 km/h and a range of 780 kilometers. It also boasts a new main gearbox, a latest-generation tail rotor and a 4-axis autopilot that reduces crew workload and makes the most demanding missions, such as SAR, easier to perform. More powerful and efficient, the AS565 MBe is also safer, more cost-effective and easier to operate.

“The Mexican Navy’s first Panther helicopters came into service ten years ago,” said Vice Admiral Jose Maria García Macedo. “Since then they have been our most loyal ally when it comes to saving lives, and it gives us great pleasure to expand our fleet with the more modern version of the same aircraft. Thanks to the state-of-the-art technology on board, the new helicopters will enhance Naval Aviation’s operational and response capability, enabling us to carry out maritime safety missions both day and night, in any weather and in heavy seas.”

Mexican Naval Aviation’s AS565 MBe Panthers fulfill NATO’s regulatory requirements in performing landings on moving ships 24 hours a day, and are thus able to operate right across Mexico’s territorial waters. Their equipment suite includes a main- and tail-rotor blade folding system, a deck-lock harpoon and an emergency flotation system.

“Naval Aviation carries out its rescue missions in the most demanding operating conditions, and we are grateful for its renewed confidence in our helicopters” said Mesrob Karalekian, Airbus Helicopters’ Vice-President for Latin America. “The contract also includes training of pilots and technicians to provide the Navy with full autonomy in managing its fleet and optimizing the availability of helicopters”.

Yesterday’s delivery of the first AS565 MBe Panther is an important milestone for Airbus Helicopters and for this iconic family of helicopters, which includes 1,000 helicopters currently in service in over 72 countries and have logged up 5.8 million flight hours.

About Airbus Helicopters (www.airbushelicopters.com)

Airbus Helicopters, a division of Airbus Group, provides the most efficient civil and military helicopter solutions worldwide. Its in-service fleet includes nearly 12,000 helicopters operated by more than 3,000 customers in 154 countries. Airbus Helicopters employs more than 22,000 people worldwide and in 2015 generated revenues of 6.8 billion euros.

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