



NEW CHAPTER OF SINO-EUROPEAN COLLABORATION- CHINA'S AIRBUS H135 FINAL ASSEMBLY LINE STARTS OPERATIONS

News / Manufacturer



H135

Making the H135 in Qingdao

In April 2019, Airbus Helicopters expanded its industrial partnership with China with the opening of the H135 final assembly line (FAL) in Qingdao. This factory is the first helicopter FAL by a foreign manufacturer in China, and the first H135 FAL to exist outside of Europe. 95 of the 100 H135s destined for the Chinese market will roll off this FAL beginning in 2019, many configured for EMS operations.



MCA
(Main component assemblies)

- Main fuselage and main gearbox kits from Donauwörth, Germany
- Rear fuselage from Albacete, Spain

STATION 1

Integration of equipment. Main gearbox. Engines, instruments & avionics. Ventilation system. Cockpit windows.

STATION 2

Doors and tail boom are combined. Adaptation of cowlings. Adaptation of inner panels. Adjustment of main rotor system and fenestron. Preparation for painting.

PAINT BOOTH

Helicopter is painted in the customer's livery.

STATION 3

Systems check. Adjustment of flight control systems. Installation of interior panels. Installation of cowlings.

STATION 4

Battery installation. Seat installation. Installation of wipers. Fuel gauging test. Rain leakage test. Preparation of handover to Flight Line.

TWO FLIGHT LINE STATIONS: ground tests and flight tests

Installation of main rotor blades and ground/flight test equipment. Ground runs. First flight. Installation of mission equipment. Final acceptance flight.

DELIVERY AREA

Final touch-ups and inspections. Handover to Delivery Centre and then to the customer.

Facts and figures

1st

Helicopter FAL by a foreign manufacturer for China

Stake

Qingdao UGAC* 49%

Airbus Helicopters 51%

*Qingdao United General Aviation Industrial Development Company

100

H135s ordered by China

18

aircraft produced per year (with max capacity of 36 over two shifts)

Around 40 employees, of whom 23 received on-the-job training in Donauwörth

Airbus Helicopters in China

300 helicopters, 83 customers

AIRBUS

Airbus Helicopters has expanded its industrial footprint and partnership with China with the opening of the H135 final assembly line in Qingdao. The factory is the first helicopter FAL built by a foreign manufacturer in China, as well as the first H135 FAL outside of Europe.

The opening of this FAL follows a cooperation agreement signed between Airbus Helicopters and China in 2016 for the purchase of 100 H135s destined for the Chinese market. Ninety-five of these 100 helicopters will be assembled on this FAL from 2019 onwards.

Main components including the main fuselage, main gearbox kits and rear fuselage will be shipped to Qingdao from Donauwörth, Germany and Albacete, Spain respectively.

The 6,500sqm Qingdao plant is composed of four working stations, a paint booth, ground and flight test areas, and a delivery centre. The site will employ around 40 people, 23 of whom received on-the-job training in Donauwörth.

The first aircraft roll-out from Qingdao is expected to take place in the second half of 2019. Operations will start with an annual capacity of 18 helicopters, which could be doubled to accommodate future growth.



“Beginning to manufacture H135s in Qingdao marks the start of a new chapter of Sino-European collaboration, as we become the first foreign helicopter manufacturer to open a manufacturing facility in China,” said Marie-Agnes Veve, General Manager of Airbus Helicopters China. “This achievement is a testament to our continued commitment to the Chinese helicopter industry and the strong spirit of cooperation that exists between us and our Chinese partners.”

The H135 is one of the most popular light twin-engine helicopters in China, mainly operating in helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS), search and rescue, law enforcement, firefighting and tourism. To date, around 1,300 helicopters from the H135 family are in operation around the globe, having achieved more than 5 million flight hours.

Present in China for more than 50 years, Airbus Helicopters holds the leading position in China’s civil helicopter market with around 300 helicopters flying across the country serving 83 customers. Given the rapid development of the HEMS, public services and offshore wind industries in the China, a potential demand for 600 light twin-engine helicopters is expected over the next two decades.

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