Press Release

A quiet approach: Airbus Helicopters demonstrates low-noise IFR operations at airport with commercial traffic

- A world's first for environmentally-friendly, helicopter-specific IFR procedures
- Conducted in the framework of Europe's Clean Sky joint technology initiative

Marignane, France, 12 May, 2015 – Airbus Helicopters has achieved another key milestone in more eco-friendly rotorcraft operations by successfully demonstrating low-noise helicopter instrument (IFR) approaches at an airport with commercial airline traffic.

As the final outcome of a seven-year project devoted to environment-friendly helicopter approach procedures, Airbus Helicopters used an H175 helicopter to fly low-noise IFR approaches to the heliport of Toulouse-Blagnac airport in south-western France.

The approach procedures were flown using accurate lateral and vertical guidance provided by EGNOS (European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service), the European Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS), and in the presence of airplane traffic simultaneously approaching and departing to/from airport runways, which proved the suitability of these helicopter-specific procedures to achieve Simultaneous Non Interfering (SNI) aircraft and rotorcraft IFR operations at a medium-size commercial airport.

"Airbus Helicopters is the world's first helicopter manufacturer to demonstrate such helicopter-specific IFR procedures at a heliport located at an airport with commercial airline traffic," said Tomasz Krysinski, the Head of Innovation and Research at Airbus Helicopters. "We are confident these environment-friendly IFR procedures will contribute to easing helicopter access at airports and remote sites in noise-sensitive areas, thus paving the way for the development of passenger transport with high-speed helicopters."

The low-noise helicopter-specific IFR approach procedures are based on the noise optimised flight paths successfully validated in 2013 by Airbus Helicopters with an H155 and having demonstrated noise footprint reductions of up to 50 per cent, which is one of the Clean Sky initiative's high-level goals.
Detailed design and integration of the procedures in Toulouse airspace was achieved by GARDEN, a partner project with expertise in Air Traffic Management (ATM) that supports Airbus Helicopters in Clean Sky.

Airbus Helicopters performed this demonstration as part of Clean Sky's Green Rotorcraft Integrated Technology Demonstrator program. Clean Sky is Europe's most ambitious aeronautical research program, with the goal of developing breakthrough technologies that significantly increase the air transport sector's environmental performance – resulting in quieter, more fuel efficient aircraft and rotorcraft.

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About Airbus Helicopters (www.airbushelicopters.com)
Airbus Helicopters is a division of Airbus Group. The company provides the most efficient civil and military helicopter solutions to its customers who serve, protect, save lives and safely carry passengers in highly demanding environments. Flying more than 3 million flight hours per year, the company's in-service fleet includes some 12,000 helicopters operated by more than 3,000 customers in 152 countries. Airbus Helicopters employs more than 23,000 people worldwide and in 2014 generated revenues of 6.5 billion Euros. In line with the company's new identity, fully integrated into Airbus Group, Airbus Helicopters has renamed its product range replacing the former "EC" designation with an "H".

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