

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.



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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