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VISIT TO MILITARY ATM MODERNISATION PROJECT SHOWS SESAR DEPLOYMENT IN GERMANY

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Brussels, Belgium, Thursday, 21st December 2017 – The AWACS retrofit project falling under the funding framework of “Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for Transport was selected by INEA – the European Commission’s (EC) Innovation and Networks Executive Agency, and EC DG MOVE for an official visit hosted by Airbus on their facility in Manching, Germany.

The visit was organised by NATO AEW&C PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AGENCY (NAPMA), and European Defence Agency (EDA, mandated as military coordinator for all SESAR deployment) in close cooperation with the SESAR Deployment Manager.

During the visit, NAPMA, EDA, and SDM explained the added value of the project in terms of benefits and results produced in the broader context of the Single European Sky and SESAR deployment in Europe.

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The European Commission and INEA witnessed the different phases and achievements of the avionics retrofitting being carried out on the military AWACS fleet. The visit was also an occasion to clarify how Pilot Common Project (PCP) concepts and its underlying technologies can generate performance improvements to the European ATM network and in more general terms, and the reason why there is a need to keep military aviation closely associated with SESAR deployment activities by exploiting CEF funding opportunities.

The AWACS project visited is part of PCP/ATM Functionality #1 (AF1), namely: Extended Arrival Management and Performance Based Navigation in high density Terminal Manoeuvring Area. This project is managed by NAPMA on behalf of a number of European States. The project is now half way towards full implementation, well on track, and will be finalised by the end of 2018. Witnessing on-site the different phases and challenges of retrofitting aged military aircraft with high tech material was one of the highlights of the visit.

The European Commission expressed its appreciation for the commitment of the implementing partners and for the timely implementation of the project so far. Having the AWACS fleet deployed in the core area of Europe, the operational impact of the project to the Air Navigation Service Providers of the region is assessed as being very significant with clear benefits to the overall performance of the European ATM network. The project provides clear evidence of the necessity to preserve and further enhance civil-military cooperation in the context of the Single European Sky.

The European Commission finally commended SDM's and EDA's support to NAPMA for the very good preparation of the project and the fruitful cooperation established since the start of the execution phase.

Dirk Beckers – Director of INEA said: “On-site visits to Implementing Partners are very important as they aim to get a reasonable assurance about the achievements and progress made in the implementation of the projects. This visit enabled INEA to witness the impressive changes from an analogue to a digital aircraft cockpit. The project and the upgrading of military aircraft in line with SES requirements will enhance civil/military cooperation and contribute to a more efficient use of airspace.”

“NAPMA, as one of the implementation partners of the 2015 call, was pleased to demonstrate to the representatives of the European Commission, INEA, and SDM the progress of the cockpit upgrade project, especially that the project is on time for an end of 2018 completion. NAPMA also would like to use this opportunity to thank EDA for their cooperation in setting up the co-funding effort”, said Heiko Juergens (NATO AEW&C Programme Management Agency – Programme Division).

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The significant financial support awarded by the European Commission towards the deployment of new concepts and technologies through INEA (Connecting Europe Facility) is a key instrument for the European Air Traffic Management sector and in particular the military.

Massimo Garbini, Managing Director at SESAR Deployment Manager stated: “The involvement of the military in the deployment of SESAR is crucial. Today we are proud to say that we have a good relationship with EDA and NAPMA in ensuring an efficient and flexible use of the available airspace.”

This was the ninth visit since the start of these visits in March 2016. All implementing partner visits aim to recognise the concrete results from a timely and successful implementation of the Pilot Common Project – six essential Air Traffic Management functionalities co-financed by the EC to facilitate comprehensive and synchronised deployment. In 2018, six more implementing partners will be visited.

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