

Germany starts work on missile

GERMANY'S BGT is beginning work on a very short-range air defence (VSHORAD) missile based on the infrared guided IRIS-T short range air-to-air missile.

The LFK NG LeFla missile is sponsored by the German BWB arms procurement agency and international partners are being sought for the programme. Development work on the concept study is getting under way and could result in an operational weapon by mid-2004.

LeFla is aimed as a back-up to man-portable systems such as Raytheon's Stinger, offering a non-line-of-sight (NLOS) mode aimed at targeting attack helicopters using terrain masking. The initial offering will be on the Ocelot tracked chassis, but BGT also aims to qualify the weapon as an air-to-air missile for the Eurocopter Tiger attack helicopter, as a post mounted man/crew portable system and as a containerised weapon suitable for point defence.

BGT's Stefan Eckert says the missile will weigh 19kg (42lb), have an 8km (5 miles)-plus range and a maximum Mach 2.5 velocity.

LeFla resembles a scaled-down IRIS-T - being 1.8m (5.9ft)-long with a 90mm diameter. The MSK one-colour, imaging infrared seeker has a 70mm diameter user a two dimensional matrix similar to IRIS-T, says Eckert. The scan field-of-view, is however, slightly less than the $\pm 90^\circ$ of IRIS-T, he adds.

Using the IRIS-T configuration gives the missile high manoeuvrability, says Eckert, while a datalink allows target position updates to be passed to the missile when used in the NLOS mode.

As with the larger weapon, aerodynamic fins and thrust vectoring control are used to manoeuvre the missile. Eckert says the TVC allows the missile to be used from vertical launchers. Bayen Chemie will supply the dual pulse motor.

Eckert says BGT will also evaluate LeFla as the basis for a longer-range SHORAD missile to replace Roland/Gepard/Rapier type systems in 2015-20. □

EADS dominates at Berlin despite disappointments

EUROPEAN government backing for civil and military projects and expected guarantees of a pan-European defence export policy to underpin profit streams for the future EADS (European Aeronautic Defence and Space) grouping provided the backdrop for the opening of ILA 2000 and the tri-national group's first public appearance as a single entity.

With its planned €4 billion (\$3.76 billion) share offering and formation as a legal trading entity on 10 July, the company was confident the stage was set for flotation of around 30% of its stock on the Frankfurt, Paris and Madrid exchanges. This is despite the deadlock between EADS and 20% partner BAE Systems over the terms for creation of the Airbus Integrated Company - a move crucial for the release of government launch funds for the A3XX ultra-large aircraft.

Rainer Hertrich, the joint chief executive of EADS, stresses the importance of key government decisions for the company's long-term profitable growth. "Six European countries are committed to the Airbus Military Company's A400M airlifter programme," he says, "and we are highly confident that Germany will join and make it

possible to launch the programme. It is the only solution to securing jobs in Europe, integrating our industry and guaranteeing security in Europe. It is also the chance to break the US monopoly in military transporters."

As *Flight International* closed for press, an announcement by Germany was expected during a Franco-German summit meeting in Mainz to announce its intention to acquire the A400M.

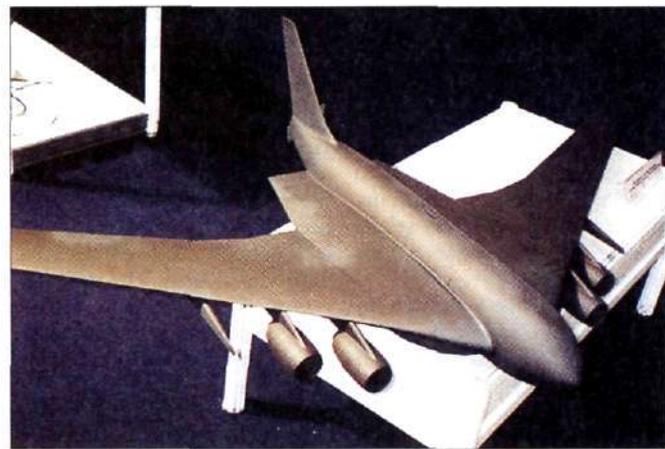
Hertrich also stresses the importance of government support for the NH90, although NH Industries (NHI) - which is 63% owned by EADS subsidiary Eurocopter - did not receive an expected production contract for the helicopters. Although France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands signed a "global commitment for the industrialisation and the production" of the helicopter, an NHI source says "administrative problems in Germany prevented contract signatures". NHI expects the signing by early next month, following the presentation of a report to a German government finance committee. The commitment covers 366 of the 595 NH90s required by the four nations, but the contract is for a first batch of 298 machines.

Hertrich adds that the UK decision to buy the Meteor beyond visual range air-to-air missile to arm the Eurofighter was key to the future of the joint EADS/BAE Systems-owned Matra BAE Dynamics guided weapons company. He hopes other Eurofighter nations will soon follow suit.

In space, with the consolidation of Europe's prime satellite and launcher industries under the Astrium banner, there were calls at the show for Europe's governments to draw up a common space defence policy and integrate their military communications, reconnaissance and early warning satellite programmes. The newly integrated group (comprising Matra Marconi Space and Dasa's space business, with Italy's Alenia Spazio due to join) could work with the governments within the context of NATO to improve Europe's military space capabilities, including joint financing.

In addition to political support for European industry-led programmes, a common export policy framework by European governments is to be finalised at the Farnborough air show in July, which will help underpin profitable growth for the company, says EADS. □

Russian institute shows windtunnel models for 750-seat airliner



RUSSIA'S Central Aerohydrodynamics Institute (TsAGI) displayed for the first time at the show two windtunnel models for a 750-seat airliner. Valery Sukhanov, TsAGI deputy director, flight control systems, says a blended wing body (BWB) model was built in the mid-1990s but this hybrid blended wing model was constructed last year. Both are 1:60 scale, representing aircraft with 600t maximum take-off weight. The BWB model was built to evaluate leading- and trailing-edge control surfaces, says Sukhanov.