

Leonardo: Agreement with the Italian Ministry of Defence for the new M-345 trainer aircraft and for the development of the new exploration and escort helicopter

- **Moretti: “The signing of these contracts is the result of constructive discussions between the Italian Government and the industry”**
- **The new aircraft will work alongside the M-346s already used by the Italian Air Force for the advanced phase of pilot training, forming the world’s most advanced training system for military pilots**
- **The new exploration and escort helicopter will replace the AW129 used by the Italian Army which is nearing 30 years in operation**

**Rome, January 13, 2017** – Leonardo has signed, with the Italian National Armaments Directorate of the Italian Defence Ministry, two contracts for an initial batch of five Aermacchi M-345 trainer aircraft and for the first phase of development and delivery programme of the new exploration and escort helicopter (NEES) for the Italian Army. The combined value of the contracts is in excess of 500 million euro.

Mauro Moretti, Chief Executive Officer and General Manager of Leonardo, said: “The signing of these two contracts is the result of constructive discussions between the Italian Government and industry, which helped identify the requirements and the best technological answers. Thanks to this joint understanding, we’ll be able to deliver advanced solutions to our national customer by optimizing available financial resources and developing new technologies, skills and industrial processes in our country.”

The Italian Air Force has a total requirement for around 45 M-345s (designated as T-345 by the Italian Armed Forces) to progressively replace the 137 in-service MB-339 aircraft which entered into operation in 1982. The new aircraft will work alongside the fleet of 18 twin-engine Aermacchi M-346s already ordered and currently used by the Italian Air Force for the advanced phase of pilot training. Together, the two aircraft types will form the world’s most advanced training system for military pilots. The M-345, thanks to its high performance and advanced ground-based training systems, will provide the Italian Air Force with a significant boost in the effectiveness of training, improved efficiency and a reduction in operational costs. The first delivery is expected by 2019.

The multiyear contract for the new exploration and escort helicopter (NEES) of the Italian Army envisages the study, development, industrialization, production and testing of a prototype and three initial production aircraft. Through this new programme, based on a total requirement for 48 units, the Italian Army will be able to replace the current fleet of AW129 which are expected to be retired from service by 2025 following over 35 years in operations. The NEES programme will benefit from the long operational expertise gained by the Italian Army thanks to the AW129 and from the know-how of Leonardo in this specific helicopter sector. It will allow the service to introduce an even more

technologically advanced product, with greater performance and lower operating costs, to meet arising needs in evolving scenarios for the next 30 years.