PRESS RELEASE

29 November 2013

THALES’S INTEGRATED MODULAR RADIO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES FLIGHT TRIALS FOR EU-FUNDED RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Thales UK and its partners involved in the EU co-funded research programme Project SANDRA have completed a successful set of flight trials for a more integrated aeronautical communications system for civil aircraft. It is the first time an Integrated Modular Radio has been used on a civil aircraft.

Anticipating the increase in market demand for broadband passenger and enhanced cabin communication services, the European Commission launched Project SANDRA to challenge industry to design and demonstrate an integrated, flexible and cost-effective communications system.

Thales UK’s Integrated Modular Radio (IMR), a sophisticated software-defined radio based on an open architecture, a common set of interfaces and on well-proven industry standards, is at the heart of the Project SANDRA solution.

Thales’s IMR has been optimised for use across all civil aviation radio communications standards and all service domains; from air traffic control (ATC) communications in the cockpit to high-bandwidth data links for passengers in the cabin. The IMR is connected to remote antenna radio heads using technology developed by the mobile communications industry which will allow far greater freedom in the design and installation of future systems on civil aircraft.

The trials took place near Munich on an Airbus A320 provided by DLR, the national aeronautics and space research centre for Germany, one of the main partners in the project. Next steps to develop the communications system are being refined; if successful across all trials, it is anticipated that the system, including Thales’s IMR, will be adopted and implemented by 2022.

Peter Hitchcock, head of Thales UK’s aerospace business said, “The successful completion of this first set of trials paves the way for a future communications system that will bring vital benefits to an industry facing significant increases in demand. These benefits go beyond operations and improved use of valuable radio spectrum and encompass better onboard customer experience.”

A video on Thales’s IMR solution for Project SANDRA can be found here.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

• Project SANDRA stands for Seamless Aeronautical Networking through integration of Data links Radios and Antennas. It is a four-year EU research project which aims to tackle some of the main challenges facing the air transportation sector.
• There are 31 international partners working together on the EU-funded project.
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ABOUT THALES AND THALES UK
Thales is a global technology leader in the Aerospace, Transportation and Defence & Security markets. In 2012, the company generated revenues of €14.2bn (equivalent to £11.5bn) with 65,000 employees in 56 countries. With its 25,000 engineers and researchers, Thales has a unique capability to design, develop and deploy equipment, systems and services that meet the most complex security requirements. Thales has an exceptional international footprint, with operations around the world working with customers and local partners.

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Thales UK employs 7,500 staff based at 35 locations. In 2012 Thales UK’s revenues were around £1.3bn.

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