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AgustaWestland and Bristow Sign Exclusive Platform Development Agreement for the AW609 TiltRotor Programme

Joint announcement made at Heli-Expo with real aircraft 'on-static' public premier

- Addressing concepts around operations, regulations, support, configurations, commercial aspects towards certification
- Preparing introduction into the market as the AW609 industrialization phase starts
- Almost 60 customers have already chosen the AW609 globally to perform several missions

Finmeccanica – AgustaWestland and Bristow announced today the signing of a platform development agreement for the AW609 TiltRotor programme. The announcement was made at Heli-Expo (Orlando, FL) on the occasion of the 'on static' public premiere of a real AW609 aircraft at the US exhibition, featuring a dedicated Bristow/Eastern Airways paint scheme.

The development agreement envisages AgustaWestland and Bristow working closely on a number of activities in support of AW609 program development addressing concepts around operations, regulations, maintenance, configuration optimization, as well as identifying possible areas of enhancement or modifications.

Under the agreement, AgustaWestland and Bristow will work to support the development of oil & gas and search and rescue dedicated configurations and capabilities. The companies would provide contribution to flying activities towards aircraft maturity and to address commercial aspects for future AW609 acquisitions.

The signing of this agreement sets a major milestone for the development of the first commercial tiltrotor towards FAA certification, which is expected to be achieved in 2017. This exclusive agreement further strengthens the long established partnership between AgustaWestland and Bristow, a prime global operator of the AW139 and the AW189 covering offshore transport and SAR operational requirements. By joining forces through their respective expertise and know-how, AgustaWestland and Bristow are moving towards a marketing and operational preparation stage as the AW609 program enters its industrialization phase.

As demand for integrated point-to-point transportation grows, Bristow has made strategic investments in Airnorth and Eastern Airways, combining fixed wing and helicopter transportation into a one-stop solution for customers. The agreement to further develop the potential capabilities of the AW609 marks a significant step towards the production of one aircraft type that will provide an ideal transportation solution for offshore travel in the future.

"We see tremendous opportunities for this aircraft for our clients who are flying to more remote and hostile environments," said Bristow President and CEO Jonathan Baliff. "With its vertical lift and landing capabilities combined with increased speed, extended range and airline-style amenities, Bristow will be able to provide more value to clients by offering complete logistics solutions with one aircraft type that will take them faster and farther offshore."

With more than 1,100 flight hours logged by the first two prototypes and two more aircraft coming, the AW609 programme is continuing to benefit from a range of enhancements to maximize the aircraft's performance and mission capabilities. Almost 60 customers have already chosen the AW609 globally to perform several missions such as offshore transport, patrol and search and rescue, executive/private transport and government roles.

Bristow Group Inc. is the leading provider of helicopter services to the worldwide offshore energy industry based on the number of aircraft operated and one of two helicopter service providers to the offshore energy industry with global operations. The company has major transportation operations in the North Sea, Nigeria and the U.S. Gulf of Mexico, and in most of the other major offshore oil and gas producing regions of the world, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Russia and Trinidad. For more information, visit the company's website at www.bristowgroup.com.