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EDIDP LynkEUs project – success of European BLOS firings with AKERON MP Missiles system in Cyprus

MBDA and its partners of the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) LynkEUs project gathered in Cyprus on the 28th and 29th of September to deliver static and dynamic presentations, and firing demonstrations. The two AKERON MP firings were a success and a major step in the definition of an initial operational concept for a European beyond-line-of-sight (BLOS) capability.

It is the first time firings have been carried out using a full configuration of the BLOS functional chain with the battlefield missile system AKERON MP. Two missiles were fired from an IMPACT turret integrated onto a SHERPA vehicle, engaging a target designated by a micro unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) via a cyber-secure link. It is also the first time that a BLOS firing has been performed from a vehicle.

On the 28th of September, on a National Guard Base in Cyprus, static and dynamic demonstrations presented and validated the capabilities developed by the different partners in the framework of the project. Among the static demonstrations were presentations on technologies such as sensors, navigation, 3D modelling, UAV landing and cyber protection. The LynkEUs consortium also performed dynamic demonstrations with different UAVs, including a micro-UAV fitted with new generation of European IR sensors and demonstrations with different unmanned ground vehicles (UGVs) equipped with observation-designation functions on gimbal sensors or with medium turret. Partners also presented a concept of a BLOS capability integration (AKERON MP and NX70 micro UAV) on a gun turret integrated on an armoured modular vehicle.

The two successful AKERON MP firings, carried out by MBDA and its partners with the support of the Cypriot Ministry of Defence, were performed on 29th September in two distinct operational configurations. One was with the UAV pilot installed in the SHERPA missile launch vehicle representing a full standalone capability. The second was with the UAV pilot installed in another vehicle one kilometre from the missile launch vehicle, typical of a collaborative engagement.

Eric Béranger, CEO of MBDA, said: *“The success of these demonstrations and firings is the first concrete step in the implementation of a European autonomous BLOS land combat capability, which is critical in the geostrategic context at the borders of Europe. They also demonstrate the essential contribution of AKERON MP to this capability. The LynkEUs project attests of the ability of MBDA to implement complex projects and bring together skills and expertise from across Europe.”*

LynkEUs is a project selected by the European Commission on July 2020 as part of the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) 2019. The project aims to define, then test, a preliminary concept of operations for a European BLOS capability and demonstrate the proof of principle through a full scale firing campaign, as well as identifying axes of evolution and improvement of the whole BLOS functional chain.

This project is the first technological contribution to the objectives of the capability project EU BLOS, endorsed on 19 November 2018 within the framework of the permanent structures cooperation (PESCO), which aims to develop a family of man-on-the-loop BLOS missile systems with back image. This project has received funding from the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) under grant agreement No EDIDP-NGPSC-2019-014-LynkEUs.

The LynkEUs project is coordinated by MBDA and involves the following partners: Aditess, FN Herstal, John Cockerill Defense, Novadem, SAFRAN, THALES, The Cyprus Institute, The Royal Military Academy, Signal Generics, XENICS, The Cyprus MoD, The Belgian MoD and The French MoD under the auspices of the European Commission

The subcontractors are: DELAIR, Milrem Robotics and CARMENTA

The selection of the MBDA led MARSEUS (Modular Architecture Solutions for EU States) project, proposed for funding in July 2022 by the European Commission, as outcome of the European Defence Fund calls for proposals 2021, is a second step of an overall industrial and technological roadmap aiming to develop and mature, under a full European design authority, the various components of a BLOS capability and their interconnection. MARSEUS aims to enhance the BLOS capability initiated by the LynkEUs project and. It will also study architecture components and functions related to a BLOS Extended Range and a BLOS Extended Capacity capabilities, as well as considering new functionalities related to collaborative combat and training aspects.

This press release reflects only the author's view. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

About MBDA:

MBDA is the only European group capable of designing and producing missiles and missile systems that correspond to the full range of current and future operational needs of the three armed forces (land, sea and air). With a significant presence in five European countries and within the USA, in 2021 MBDA achieved revenue of 4.2 billion euro with an order book of 17.8 billion euro. In total, the group offers a range of 45 missile systems and countermeasures products already in operational service and more than 15 others currently in development. MBDA is jointly owned by Airbus (37.5%), BAE Systems (37.5%), and Leonardo (25%).

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