



AQUILA: MBDA to lead consortium for European interceptor against hypersonic threats

The extended air defence domain poses increasing challenges with fast-growing and complex threats, such as manoeuvring ballistic missiles, hypersonic cruise missiles and hypersonic glide vehicles. These new threats need to be addressed by dedicated interception solutions to ensure the efficient protection of domestic high value assets and operational deployments in the coming decades.

MBDA has worked for more than five years on innovative options for counter-hypersonic air-defence building on our expertise from the ASTER anti-missile interceptor and our deep knowledge of threats. This is the AQUILA project, proposing the most valuable counter-hypersonic interceptor concepts for European nations, alongside a global area defence portfolio with other MBDA air defence products.

In March 2023, MBDA was invited with its partners to tender for a concept architecture and technology maturation study of an endo-atmospheric interceptor against the new high end emerging threats.

HYDIS² is the Hypersonic Defence Interceptor Study proposed by MBDA with a consortium bringing together 19 partners and more than 30 subcontractors across 14 European countries.

The members of the consortium are defence groups, institutions, SMEs, mid-caps and universities, all with strong, recognised expertise in the key technologies/areas needed for the purpose of the study of such a new interceptor. The consortium gathers the best competences in the domains of missiles from across the European Union, with the highest aeronautical scientific references, and actors in novel domains to take up the gauntlet of the counter-hypersonic challenge.

Eric Béranger, CEO of MBDA, said: *"This project offers a significant European benefit, contributing to European resilience and technological sovereignty by enhancing co-operation and interoperability between EU countries. This project will also contribute to reinforcing the sovereign missile systems industry in Europe, by sustaining and developing critical expertise, technologies and materials; thus boosting European industrial competitiveness. The technologies in the hypersonic domain are evolving, and it is a priority for MBDA to remain at the forefront of innovation, guiding Europe towards the most efficient solution to counter hypersonic threats."*

The objective of HYDIS² is to design various interceptor concepts and mature the associated critical technologies to deliver the best interception solution that fulfils the four member states needs - France, Italy, Germany and The Netherlands - and copes with the European TWISTER capability programme. This is a central element of the contribution of European states to the mission of defence of populations and armed forces, in particular against the emerging hypersonic threats that constitute a radical change from ballistic ones.

France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands have already confirmed their support and commitment by signing a Letter of Intent and agreeing on Initial Common Requirements.

About MBDA

MBDA is a unique multi-national European group, a world-leader in the field of complex weapon systems, playing a key role in keeping nations safe. Created in the spirit of international co-operation, MBDA and its more than 14,000 employees work together to support the national sovereignty of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK, and other allied countries worldwide. As an accelerator for innovation, MBDA is the only European group capable of designing and manufacturing complex weapons to meet the full range of current and future operational requirements of the three armed forces (land, sea and air). MBDA is owned by Airbus (37.5%), BAE Systems (37.5%) and Leonardo (25%).

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