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Saab not attending Swiss flight tests

The Swiss defence procurement agency, armasuisse, has formally recommended to Saab not to participate with Gripen E in the upcoming flight tests in Switzerland. The reason is that the flight tests have been designed to only evaluate aircraft that are operationally ready in 2019. The flight tests are part of the fighter evaluation process that foresees aircraft deliveries in 2025. Gripen E will enter into operational service years before Switzerland has scheduled deliveries and will meet all its defined capabilities. However, the Gripen E development plan does not match the Swiss plan to perform flight tests with aircraft that are operationally ready in 2019. Therefore, Saab has decided not to attend the Swiss flight tests in Payerne 24-28 June.

Gripen E is currently being developed, tested and produced for Sweden and Brazil. It is the most modern and technologically advanced fighter aircraft being developed. The programme is running at a fast and successful speed, with customer deliveries starting later this year.

Upon an invitation from armasuisse, Saab submitted a proposal for Gripen E on 25 January 2019. Since the submission of the proposal in January, the armasuisse' expectations on the flight tests have evolved to expect participation of operationally ready aircraft. As Gripen E is yet to become operational, Saab has presented solutions to perform the Swiss flight tests in 2019. An offer to complement the Gripen E test aircraft with an operational Gripen C aircraft for the flight tests in June 2019 has not been accepted by armasuisse. Competitors have showcased capabilities on existing platforms, which are different to the versions offered for delivery.

Throughout the Gripen E programme Saab has publicly communicated the status of the Gripen E's development as key programme milestones have been passed. It can be assumed that armasuisse had the relevant knowledge when they invited Saab to participate in the tender process in 2018, of both the Gripen E development programme and the conditions under which Gripen E would be able to compete.

We believe that Gripen E is the best choice for Switzerland and the offer, as presented in January 2019, still stands. Saab is committed to deliver at least 40 Gripen E fighter aircraft on time, meeting requirements and within planned budget, including a

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comprehensive support concept with local contribution, guaranteeing the most affordable operating costs and the highest level of autonomy.

Background

Switzerland has a need to replace its fighter fleet of F/A-18 Hornet and F-5 E/F Tiger aircraft. In January 2019, Saab offered a proposal consisting of options for 30, and 40, new build Gripen E fighter aircraft to Switzerland. The Gripen E proposal satisfies all required capabilities for Switzerland and is based on the Swedish Air Force configuration as requested.

In the previous Swiss fighter aircraft procurement process, Saab offered Switzerland Gripen E in a joint procurement with Sweden. At the time, the Gripen E time plan was aligned to meet the Swiss requirement for IOC in 2021. When Switzerland decided to stop its acquisition of new fighters in 2014, the time plan was changed and adapted after Swedish and Brazilian requirements.

At the time of delivery, Gripen E will provide the Swiss Air Force with the very latest available technology integrated into a mature and robust platform that meets all the Swiss needs. Gripen E stands out among the contenders in the Swiss fighter procurement as the newest aircraft system.

The Gripen E programme is progressing according to plan, with production on-going and customer deliveries starting this year. The latest technologies are being incorporated to provide air forces with operational capabilities designed to defeat the threats of today but also the future. Key milestones achieved during the past six months include flights with IRIS-T and Meteor, as well as the third Gripen E aircraft's first flight.

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