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Finmeccanica: Alenia Aeronautica signs a €75 million contract for 3 C-27Js with Lithuania

The Lithuanian Republic's Armed Force and Alenia Aeronautica have signed today a €75 million contract for the supply of three units of the new-generation tactical transport aircraft C-27J.

The selection has been made within a bid for the renewal of the current fleet of Soviet-made twin-engine An-26s in service with the Lithuanian Air Force.

The C-27Js will be used for troops and cargo transport, in and out of the national boundaries, within the operational scenarios ruled by NATO, of which Lithuania has been member from 2004.

The delivery of the first C-27J is planned for the end of 2006 while the next ones will be supplied in the 2008 / 2009. The C-27J represents the most advanced new-generation medium tactical military airlifter and will allow the Lithuanian Air Force, engaged in a modernisation campaign, to fully respect the interoperability standards required by the NATO countries.

The C-27J is the only aircraft of its category specifically designed as tactical transport aircraft and thanks to its operational characteristics ensures unique short take-off and landing performances, from paved and unpaved surfaces; full self deployment operations thanks to its APU, Auxiliary Power Unit; full interoperability with other aircraft in service with NATO Air Forces, thanks to the large cargo compartment that allows the use of NATO-standard pallets and to the state-of-the art avionic and self-protection systems, in order to operate in the most difficult operational scenarios.

The Lithuanian choice confirms the C-27J as the most successful aircraft with the new NATO members and strengthens its candidacy in other bids under way in Europe and in America, where the operational performances are the key element to determine its choice by the different Air Forces.

In addition to Lithuania, the aircraft has already been ordered so far by the Italian Air Force (12 aircraft), Greek Air Force (12 aircraft, plus 3 options) and by the Bulgarian Armed Forces (8 aircraft). In the United States, the C-27J runs for the JCA, Joint Cargo Aircraft program, for the renewal of the Army's and Air Forces' transport aircraft fleet, while in Canada it is proposed for the renewal of the Search and Rescue aircraft fleet. The C-27J is also under evaluation by Australia, Taiwan, Ireland, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and by other Countries recently become NATO members, such as Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia.