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Finmeccanica in the United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates is a strong growth market for Finmeccanica, with unprecedented economic and industrial diversification. Finmeccanica group companies have had a presence in the UAE for several years: Ansaldo Energia has an office in Abu Dhabi, while AgustaWestland operates in Dubai. Finmeccanica is very interested in increasing its activities in the country, and for this reason it opened an office in Abu Dhabi last year. The aim of this is to build the Group's capacity in the UAE in an integrated way, underpin and coordinate the activities of its companies and their commercial and representative initiatives, follow the development of programmes and after-sales support and monitor the situation and continual changes in what is one of the world's most dynamic markets.

The UAE is on the lookout for industrial partners that have the capabilities and skills to assist in the development of a truly state-of-the-art industrial system that can compete on a technological level in international markets, and it is against this backdrop that **Finmeccanica** signed an agreement with **Mubadala Development Company** (a business development and investment company based in Abu Dhabi) in October 2008. The agreement signed by the two companies was for the development of industrial facilities at Al Ain, in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, to manufacture structural components in composite materials for Finmeccanica group companies and other international firms. The ceremony for officially opening the facilities took place on 14 November 2009.

In 2005, in association with Abu Dhabi Ship Building (ADSB), **SELEX Sistemi Integrati** set up the joint venture **Abu Dhabi Systems Integration - ADSI** (of which SELEX Sistemi Integrati owns 43% and Abu Dhabi Ship Building 57%), which is active in the defence and homeland security sector. The joint venture ADSI is currently involved in manufacturing and integrating the combat system of the six BAYNUNAH corvettes for the UAE Navy, from which it also secured a contract, as part of the Ghannatha programme, to supply command and control systems to be fitted to the new high-speed patrol boats for the UAE armed forces.

Finmeccanica was selected by the UAE Navy to supply – through its companies **SELEX Sistemi Integrati, Oto Melara and Wass** - naval and underwater systems for a new Abu Dhabi class ship of the UAE Navy.

Other group companies also have specific commercial interests in the country, and are actively promoting their own solutions and systems. At the International Defence Exhibition and Conference (IDEX) in February, the UAE government announced the selection of 48 **Alenia Aermacchi** M-346 Master lead-in fighter trainer aircraft, recently purchased by the Italian government. These aircraft represent the most advanced solution for current military training requirements and offer very high levels of performance and manoeuvrability at a relatively low cost.

Staying with aeronautics sector, the C-27J tactical transport aircraft produced by **Alenia Aeronautica**, whose special features (multifunctionality and take-off and landing capability on short and semi-prepared runways under 500 metres in length) make it particularly fit for purpose, is being proposed as the ideal solution for the UAE air force, and for the armed forces of other countries in the region in the future. Alenia Aeronautica also intends to promote the special versions of its ATR series.

In the helicopter sector, **AgustaWestland** has already sold more than 50 helicopters of various types and for various applications in the UAE, and has signed an agreement with Abu Dhabi Aviation to supply support services for its helicopters.

Ground, coastal and port surveillance programmes are also very promising: the complex systems integration capabilities of **SELEX Sistemi Integrati** and the special expertise of **DRS Technologies**, **SELEX Galileo**, **SELEX Communications**, **OTO Melara**, **WASS** and **Elsag Datamat** place these companies in an excellent position to meet emerging demand in this area.

Economic growth, a rising population and the commercial development of the United Arab Emirates will also make it necessary to upgrade the local mobility and transport infrastructure, as well as the technological infrastructure for communications and satellite services. Finmeccanica group companies – **Ansaldo STS**, **AnsaldoBreda**, **Telespazio** (Finmeccanica/Thales) and **Thales Alenia Space** (Thales/Finmeccanica) – are already particularly active in these sectors, and are focusing on the opportunities that the UAE offers.

Finmeccanica's activities and successes in the United Arab Emirates certainly represent a useful point of reference for future opportunities, both in the UAE and throughout the Gulf region.