



AIRBUS AND FOKKER ENTER INTO STRATEGIC R&D PARTNERSHIP FOR FIBRE METAL LAMINATE PRODUCTION

News / Manufacturer



Papendrecht, Airbus and Fokker Technologies, a division of GKN Aerospace, will today sign a Memorandum of Understanding for a strategic partnership in research development and automation of Fibre Metal Laminate (FML) production, in the presence of the Royal couple of the Netherlands, his Royal Highness King Willem-Alexander and her Royal Highness Queen Maxima, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Lilianne Ploumen and the French Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Development charged with European Affairs Harlem Désir.

FML is the second generation of a revolutionary lightweight material, consisting of alternate layers of bonded aluminum and glass fibre. The first generation (also known as Glare®) has been very successfully applied on the upper fuselage and the vertical tail plane of the Airbus A380 since 2005. Smart automated production technology and the next generation of fibres are the main characteristics of the intended development.

Smart automated and robotized production technology will enable high volume production rates and increase affordability for OEM's.

Hans Büthker CEO Fokker Technologies says “ I am proud that we can take this next research step in production automation of FML together with Airbus. This advanced lightweight material has been developed by Fokker more than twenty years ago together with Technical University of Delft and NLR (National Dutch Aerospace Laboratory) within the renowned Dutch aerospace ecosystem and we have industrialized it at that time together with Airbus for the application on the A380 fuselage panels. Now we can take the next research step in automation of the production again with the same great partner, this is an important development for future applications of FML”

Advanced material

Fibre Metal Laminates are advanced materials offering weight savings of 15% compared with traditional aircraft materials, together with benefits that include expected more efficient processing in production, lower costs of structural components and a high level of fire safety. Fibre Metal Laminate has high strength, is lightweight and contributes to the drive towards sustainable aviation. As a result fuel consumption is reduced, the range of the aircraft is increased and higher payloads seem possible.

Leading position worldwide

The Dutch aerospace industry holds a leading position worldwide in lightweight material applications. This position is due partly to the excellent national knowledge infrastructure in the aerospace industry, materials and processes. Partnership with customers, suppliers, universities and knowledge institutes in innovation platforms, supported by active government policy, shows how this structured approach is taking new technology developments to the next level.

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