BRÉGIER: AIRBUS CONFIDENT OF A320NEO DELIVERY IN 2015

News / Manufacturer, Personalities

Airbus CEO Fabrice **Bregier** is confident the European manufacturer will meet a year-end deadline to bring its **A320neo** into commercial service. The statement followed last week's "minor damage" to one of the test aircraft's engines. MSN6101, the first A320neo prototype equipped with Pratt & Whitney's PW1100G, was affected.

The A320neo test plane was undergoing hot-weather testing in the Middle East when the incident occurred in Al Ain in the United Arab Emirates.

"The reason was not a technical, unexpected failure—it was more about the life of this engine, which was not appropriate, because this engine was being tested in more intense conditions in the past," he said.

Bregier said the A320neo is in the final phase of flight-test certification and will next start route-proofing.

"My hope is to certify this engine. Was it as smooth as we expected? No. Does it mean it will fail?

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No. We plan delivery of the first aircraft by the end of the year," Brégier explained.

"Then again, we will face another [production] ramp-up," he said.

Qatar Airways is first in line for the new aircraft, with delivery scheduled this year.

The A320neo is powered by engines either from Pratt & Whitney or by CFM International. An Airbus A320neo powered by the CFMI LEAP-1A engine achieved its first flight in France last May.

Airbus said the A320neo family will be able to deliver a 15% fuel burn saving from its entry into service, increasing to 20% by 2020. This will be achieved through both cabin innovations and further engine enhancements.

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