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AUSTRIA OFFERED UP TO 30 NEW GRIPEN FIGHTERS

The Gripen team has submitted its response to the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the replacement of the Saab Draken interceptor fleet to meet Austria's air defense needs for the next 30 years. The company's proposal is based on the supply of up to 30 new Gripen fighters.

"Gripen is the world's most capable and cost effective combat aircraft in operation today, and together with our long-term program of industrial cooperation and offset, we are confident that our offer is the best solution for Austria, the Austrian Air Force and the Austrian industry", says Roger Lantz, Gripen Director in Austria.

The Gripen offer includes two possible solutions to the Austrian Air Force Requirement:

- The first solution is based on the supply of 24 new single-seat and six optional dual-seat Gripen fighters, and an associated interim solution of 12 leased Gripen fighters.
- A second, alternative solution proposes an early delivery of 24 new single-seat and four dual-seat Gripen fighters. This solution avoids the need for an interim leasing period.

Each solution builds on the last 40-years military co-operation to meet the needs for a smooth transition from the Saab Draken, and both provide continuous air policing during the transition phase.

"Both solutions offer exceptional value for money, both in initial procurement as well as over the next 30 years or more of operation, and both are backed by a large, high quality industrial co-operation program", says Roger Lantz, Gripen Director in Austria.

The benefits to Austria of the Gripen solution are:

- Delivery of the most capable and cost-effective multi-role combat aircraft in operation worldwide today.
- Delivery of the largest program of high quality industrial cooperation ever seen in Austria, tailored to Austrian requirements.
- Optional payment financing through a consortium led by Erste Bank
- Cost efficient introduction into service built on 40 years of Austrian-Swedish cooperation

The specific benefits for the Austrian Air Force are:

- A fully interoperable fighter, which supports international standardization of doctrines and procedures, including datalink communications and an air-to-air refueling system.
- First operational squadron in 2005 (either lease or new aircraft)
- In service before the retirement of Draken.
- A 30 year solution to the Air Force requirement
- Continuous training through the transitional period from the Saab Draken
- A full logistics package with training devices, including a flight simulator, and training in Sweden and Austria.
- Greatly reduced cost of operating Gripen will enable higher levels of operational training without the need for increased expenditure
- Optional training can be provided from the UK Ministry of Defence
- Opportunity for Austria to be involved in future enhancement programs

“The Gripen team's offer is based on 9 years preparatory work since the opening of an office in Vienna in 1993. We have submitted fully compliant offers to both BMLV (Austrian Ministry of Defence) and BMWA (Austrian Ministry of Economy) and we believe that the Gripen solution will provide the most cost efficient security for Austria over the next 30 years”, says Roger Lantz, Gripen Director in Austria.

Notes to editors:

Gripen is the first fourth-generation multi-role fighter in service world-wide, designed to meet the demands of all current and future threats, while at the same time meeting strict peace-time requirements for flight safety, reliability, training efficiency and low operating costs.

Already in service with the Swedish Air Force, which has ordered 204 aircraft (including 28 dual-seaters), Gripen has also been ordered by the South African Air Force (28 aircraft) and Hungary has signed an agreement with the Swedish government for the lease of 14 Gripen fighters. Gripen has also recently been selected to meet the national, NATO and European defense needs of the Czech Republic, which has a requirement for 24 fighters.

Gripen International has begun negotiations with the Polish government, which is looking to procure up to 60 new fighters and an offer has been submitted to the Brazilian government based on the supply of 24 new Gripen.

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Gripen International is a company equally owned by Saab of Sweden and BAE SYSTEMS of the UK.

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