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PRESS INFORMATION

Handläggare *Handled by*

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Datum *Date*

September 2, 2004

Referens *Reference*

CU 04:062 E

Saab has, for the first time, conducted autonomous take-off and landing of the SHARC technical demonstrator

On Wednesday August 25, Saab conducted its first totally autonomous flight with its unmanned aerial vehicle, the SHARC technical demonstrator. SHARC took off, flew and landed completely according to plan, and Saab can now count itself among the few companies to succeed in conducting a totally autonomous flight.

"By conducting flights with autonomous take-off and landing, we have shown the rest of the world that we are a company to be reckoned with in future collaborative international UAV projects. We have strengthened our position as one of the main players in the UAV market," says Lennart Sindahl, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Saab Aerosystems.

The flight took place during a test campaign at the Swedish Defence Materiel Administration test site in Vidsel. After taking off without pilot assistance, the SHARC performed a totally autonomous mission before landing on its own, aided by differential GPS and a radar height finder.

The SHARC technical demonstrator has been developed by Saab. The project began in 2001 and the first flight was conducted in February 2002. The test campaign recently carried out in Vidsel is the third in order. The previous test campaigns, which included autonomous flights both within and beyond the point of visibility, laid the foundation for the successful autonomous take-off and landing.

Successfully completing totally autonomous flights – i.e. flights with no pilot assistance whatsoever – is an important stage in Saab's development of autonomous UAVs.

There are many advantages of being able to conduct autonomous take-offs and landings, as these are the points where a large proportion of UAV failures occur. Automating these parts of a flight therefore represents a dramatic risk reduction, while also bringing about tactical and operational benefits such as landing at dusk or in darkness.

Saab is one of the world's leading high-technology companies, with its main operations focusing on defence, aviation and space. The Group covers a broad spectrum of competence and capability in systems integration.

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