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## Gripen conducts high altitude firing with Meteor

**Yet another important milestone was reached today when Gripen successfully conducted the first Meteor firing in the UK and continued the testing of the six-nation Meteor air dominance missile.**

“Gripen is the first and so far only fighter aircraft that has launched Meteor. With today’s firing Gripen once again proves to be a reliable platform for the integration and testing of complex future missile systems for the world’s new generation combat aircraft”, says Lennart Sindahl, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Saab Aerosystems.

At the same time as being an important achievement for Saab and Gripen, the firing also marks a significant milestone in the European multinational Meteor air-to-air missile project. The purpose of today’s High Altitude Control and Dispersion (C&D) firing was to test the performance of the missile’s integrated boost, ramjet sustain motor and control systems during high altitude supersonic launch, extended free flight and extensive manoeuvres.

“Meteor was rail-launched from Gripen flying supersonic at an altitude of 42,650ft. The missile followed a pre-programmed flight profile for several minutes and was then broken up in flight as intended”, says Magnus Ljungdahl, Gripen Test Pilot at Saab.

Today’s firing with Meteor at the UK’s Hebrides missile firing range follows a series of lower altitude Air Launched Demonstrator firings in 2006 and seeker data gathering trials in early 2007. Saab will continue the firing and radar tests with the missile up until 2010 in Vidsel in Sweden, the Hebrides in Scotland and at Aberporth in Wales.

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**Notes to editors**

Meteor is a fast and highly manoeuvrable Beyond Visual Range (BVR) air-to-air missile, for use against air targets. In the future it can replace the American AMRAAM system.

The prime contract for the Meteor programme was signed, during December 2002, by MBDA as prime contractor and the Defence Procurement Agency in the UK on behalf of the Governments of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the UK. MBDA leads the Meteor programme team with key partners including Saab Bofors Dynamics of Sweden and INMIZE of Spain.

In 2001, Swedish authorities signed an international agreement to provide Gripen as a platform for testing the high-tech Beyond Visual Range (BVR) Meteor missile. Saab was involved in the programme as early as 2003, when Saab Bofors Dynamics was awarded a contract to be part of the development and production of the missile. Later that year, Saab Aerosystems received an order from the Swedish Defence Material Administration, FMV, concerning the integration of Meteor on Gripen. In April 2007, Saab was entrusted with the responsibility for carrying out new missile tests with Meteor, which now are being conducted.

The Gripen is the first of the new generation fighter aircraft to enter service and the only combat aircraft currently available for testing the high-tech beyond visual range missiles of the future. Using the latest available technology it is capable of performing an extensive range of air-to-air and air-to-surface operational missions and employing the latest weapons. Gripen, designed to meet the demands of current and future threats, is in service with the Swedish, Czech Republic and Hungarian Air Forces and has also been ordered by the South African Air Force. The UK Empire Test Pilots' School (ETPS) is also operating Gripen as its advanced fast jet platform for test pilots world wide.

MBDA is a world leading, global missile systems company. MBDA currently has 45 missile system and countermeasure programmes in operational service and has proven its ability as prime contractor to head major multi-national projects. MBDA is jointly owned by BAE SYSTEMS (37.5%), EADS (37.5%) and FINMECCANICA (25%).

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