FIREHAWK® Helicopters To Join Europe's Fight Against Wildfires

Leading aerial firefighting fleet in U.S. expands to Czech Republic, marking international debut
RescEU, Czech Republic Ministry of Interior, Česká Letecká Servisní, PZL Mielec, and United Rotorcraft ally to bring the continent new capabilities



A Sikorsky FIREHAWK® helicopter responds to the devastating Los Angeles-area wildfires, January 2025. Photo courtesy of Greg Doyle.

PRAGUE, Czech Republic, Nov. 18, 2025 — In a significant step forward in Europe's fight against wildfires, PZL Mielec, a Lockheed Martin company (NYSE: LMT), announced a groundbreaking contract with Česká Letecká Servisní (CLS) and the Czech Republic Ministry of Interior for two new Sikorsky S-70 FIREHAWK® helicopters, marking the first international fleet of its kind.

FIREHAWK helicopters play a key role in responding to the most challenging wildfires and emergencies across the United States, and this expansion onto the European continent comes at a critical time when wildfires have become an increasingly pressing local concern. The 2025 wildfire season in Europe has been the worst on record, with over 1 million hectares burned, highlighting the urgent need for effective and reliable aerial firefighting solutions.

Supported by the European Commission's RescEU program, these aircraft will be based in the Czech Republic and available to enhance aerial firefighting and emergency response missions throughout Europe. Under the agreement, the Czech Republic Ministry of Interior has the option to acquire a third FIREHAWK helicopter at a future date.

"As wildfires increasingly threaten communities across Europe, we are proud that PZL Mielec can provide such advanced helicopters to keep residents, resources, and infrastructure safe for decades to come," said Janusz Zakręcki, president and general director of PZL Mielec. "This helicopter, produced in Poland, is a clear example of how our technology supports critical wildfire and emergency response efforts, and we look forward to continuously expanding the fleet's reach into new countries around the globe."

FIREHAWKs begin as Black Hawk® helicopters made in Europe by PZL Mielec in Poland. Each Black Hawk manufactured at its cutting-edge production facility is the result of hundreds of engineers, technicians, and specialists who ensure the aircraft's safety and reliability. The company is one of Poland's biggest defense exporters and underpins a robust European supply chain, employing 1,700 workers and indirectly sustaining about 5,000 jobs across the European Union with its network of 1,200 local suppliers.

"Welcoming the FIREHAWK to Europe represents a major leap forward in the continent's wildfire and emergency response," said Dr. Dennis Goege, Lockheed Martin vice president and chief executive for Europe. "By combining the FIREHAWK's proven capabilities with the expertise of European emergency responders, we can more efficiently and effectively manage the growing threat of wildfires."

"We are proud to partner with PZL Mielec and United Rotorcraft to bring this revolutionary aerial firefighting capability to Europe for the first time," said Monika Kowalczykova, chief executive officer of Česká Letecká Servisní. "The FIREHAWK's unparalleled capabilities and abilities to operate in challenging conditions will provide European communities with a vital tool in the fight against devastating wildfires."

Black Hawk helicopters are modified into FIREHAWK helicopters for aerial firefighting and disaster relief exclusively by U.S.-based United Rotorcraft. The Colorado-based company has now delivered 28 FIREHAWK helicopters to U.S. agencies, with an additional 5 more currently in production. In order to support this first delivery in Europe, United Rotorcraft will be partnering with CLS to outfit these helicopters locally.

“We couldn’t be more thrilled to see the FIREHAWK make its debut in Europe. We look forward to working with CLS on this first build outside of Colorado,” said Larry Alexandre, president of United Rotorcraft.

With its 1,000-gallon (3,785 liter) water tank, retractable snorkel, twin turbine engine, and night vision capability, the FIREHAWK is designed to stop fires in their tracks before they have the chance to grow. U.S. public safety agencies routinely rely on FIREHAWKs night and day through dangerous and deteriorating conditions that force other aircraft to remain grounded.

Currently, 28 FIREHAWK aircraft support the Los Angeles County Fire Department, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), Ventura County Fire Department, Santa Barbara Fire Department, Orange County Fire Authority, and the State of Colorado Division of Fire Protection and Control.

Lockheed Martin company Sikorsky and CAL FIRE recentlyannounced a new initiative to expand the research, innovation, and operational capabilities of firefighting aviation resources, including the exploration of an autonomous FIREHAWK helicopter.

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