



Eurocopter / W. Obruensnik

EC155

6,000 HOURS ON THE METER

The Danish helicopter operator DanCopter has passed the symbolic milestone of 6,000 flight hours with its first EC155.

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DanCopter was founded in 2003 to meet the needs of oil & gas companies on the Danish market. From the very beginning, the company's operations focused on the EC155, "a helicopter of exactly the right size for our requirements," notes managing director Nils Skeby. DanCopter now owns four EC155s, two of which are based in the Netherlands. As of April, another of the rotorcraft will be based in Ireland.

As a result of the extremely rapid pace of operations, the oldest EC155, which entered service in summer 2003, passed the symbolic milestone of 6,000 flight hours on November 23rd, 2007.

"Our helicopters spend between 140 and 170 hours in the air every month, day and night," stresses Nils Skeby. "In September, one of our helicopters even chalked up a record 183.7 flight hours in a single month, an average of over six hours a day!"

The pace is so fast that DanCopter's maintenance department decided to split up the 600-hour technical inspection into different segments so as to ground the helicopters for as short a time as possible. "We divided the inspection into six separate tasks which we were able to carry out at weekends, from Friday evening to

Monday morning," explains head of maintenance Arne Lange. "The interruptions were minimal, and we were very agreeably surprised not to discover a single trace of corrosion after several years of offshore operations!" The helicopter's flight characteristics are appreciated by pilots and passengers alike. "Both groups tell me that the EC155 feels like an airliner," asserts Nils Skeby. "It's a very stable and quiet aircraft, with a low vibration level. The standard of comfort always comes as a surprise to people who are used to flying the previous generation of helicopters!"

Nevertheless, there is just one drawback: while DanCopter appreciated the value of the attention paid to it by Eurocopter when the EC155s first entered service in 2003, it is currently noticing that it has to wait somewhat longer for spare parts...

"I realise that we have now become just another customer like all the rest," accedes Nils Skeby. "It means we have to wait our turn to get the parts and technical assistance that we need ... But that doesn't detract from the merits of the EC155, which for us is a money maker. What's more, we have two further EC155s on order, which we will receive in 2009."

DanCopter owns four EC155s, two of which are on loan to the Netherlands. As of April, a fifth EC155 will be based in Ireland.