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The United Arab Emirates Government selects Finmeccanica for 48 M-346 advanced lead-in fighter trainer aircraft

The United Arab Emirates Government today announced at IDEX 2009 (International Defence Exhibition & Conference) in Abu Dhabi that it had begun negotiations for the acquisition of 48 M-346 advanced lead-in fighter trainer aircraft manufactured by Alenia Aermacchi, a Finmeccanica company. The agreement, which also includes the creation of a joint venture in the UAE between Alenia Aermacchi and the Mubadala Development Company (Mubadala) to establish a final assembly line for the M-346, is the result of close collaboration between the Italian Government and the defence industry, which have worked together to capitalise on Italian excellence in the aeronautics high-tech sector.

"The selection of the Alenia Aermacchi M-346 by the United Arab Emirates Government represents a huge success for the Italian high-tech industry" said Pier Francesco Guarguaglini, Chairman and CEO of Finmeccanica. "It is an endorsement of considerable strategic value for Finmeccanica, as it confirms the supremacy of this advanced next-generation trainer aircraft at international level and paves the way for further successes in the global markets, where others important campaigns are already under way. The UAE Government's selection of the M-346 forms part of a broader industrial co-operation agreement recently signed by Finmeccanica and Mubadala which foresees, among other things, the manufacturing of aerostructures in composite materials for the civil sector in Abu Dhabi".

The M-346 "Master"

The M-346 "Master", designed and developed by Alenia Aermacchi, a Finmeccanica company, is the only new generation advanced lead-in fighter trainer aircraft currently under development in Europe. The twin engine M-346 is tailored to train pilots to fly future combat aircraft and will be used in every phase of advanced and pre-operational training, reducing the hours flown on more expensive aircraft. In order to optimise training effectiveness and operating costs, the M-346 embodies the latest concepts of "design-to-cost", supportability and production optimisation, with a high level of performances and a human-machine interface representative of new generation combat aircraft such as the Eurofighter, the Rafale, the F-16 and the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.