

## Airbus Develops UAV Launcher for A400M Aircraft

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A400M UAV launcher

Airbus has developed a launcher to release unmanned air vehicles (UAVs) from the belly of an Airbus A400M military transport aircraft.

The development of the UAV Launcher project has been performed in a non-traditional way in only half a year. This project is the result of a cooperation between Airbus as A400M integrator, Geradts GmbH for the launcher and SFL GmbH from Stuttgart for UAV integration and supported by DLR simulations. It included concept, development and production of a UAV Launcher prototype for the A400M.

*"We have developed a UAV launching mechanism to launch drones from a flying A400M plane. Imagine a combat scenario where multiple remote carriers are required. If you have an A400M, you could launch them and later on multiple UAVs,"* Andreas Heckman, Project Leader UAV Launcher, said in an official video.

Talking about the challenges the team faced aside of COVID-19 restrictions, he said they only had six months to develop a flight demonstrator.



*"We had to perform safe separation of the UAV from the A400M through simulation... We have assessed all safety scenarios and developed safety procedures for the crew. We worked with different sites in Germany and Spain,"* the official said.

He said that efforts are underway to finalize integration tests and perform flight tests.

**Development of the A400M UAV launcher is part of "Innovations for FCAS" (I4 FCAS) initiative**, pilot phase of which was concluded last month. During the pilot phase, 18 innovative players worked on 14 projects in different areas, covering the whole range of FCAS elements: combat cloud, connectivity, new generation fighter, remote carriers, system of systems, sensors.