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French Prime Minister inaugurates A350 XWB Final Assembly Line Facility named after Airbus pioneer and founding father, Roger Béteille

French Prime Minister, Jean-Marc Ayrault and Airbus President and Chief Executive Officer, Fabrice Brégier this morning officially inaugurated the 74,000 square-metre A350 XWB Final Assembly Line (FAL), in Toulouse, France. At full production, the FAL will employ some 1,500 people who will build up to ten aircraft a month as from 2018.

The ceremony, held inside the FAL, was attended by French political representatives, regional officials representatives from other Airbus home governments, as well as Airbus customers, suppliers, top executives and over 1,000 employees.

"Innovation is deeply rooted in our DNA and this is fully demonstrated on the A350 XWB, the world's newest, most advanced airliner. Today we honour Roger Béteille, an exceptional aviation pioneer and we name the A350 XWB Final Assembly Line after him, one of our industry's greatest innovators," said Fabrice Brégier, Airbus President & CEO.

"It is a great honour for me to have my name associated with this magnificent, state of the art A350 Final Assembly Line," said Roger Béteille. "Airbus' success is a concrete example of how European partners working hand in hand can achieve incredible things together and this has been an essential ingredient to becoming the world's largest and premier aircraft manufacturer."

Guests at the ceremony were able to see the A350 XWB coming to life, with the first two aircraft (the static aircraft and the first flyable aircraft, MSN1) at different stages of final assembly.

The static aircraft, which will be used solely for ground tests, has nearly completed assembly, with a full fuselage, two wings and the vertical tail plane joined. The aircraft will be transferred to the static test hangar at the Toulouse Jean-Luc Lagardère site to be prepared for static tests to start in spring 2013. The first flyable A350 XWB (MSN1) is also progressing well, with the fuselage already joined. The wing, vertical and horizontal tail plane for MSN1 are inside the FAL and will be joined to the fuselage in early November.

Béteille was one of Airbus' four founding fathers. He was instrumental in the development of fly by wire flight controls, one of Airbus' key innovations which has since become the industry standard. Béteille's was also responsible for the introduction of the world's first two engine wide-body aircraft, the A300 which performed its first flight 40 years ago. With the inauguration of this new FAL, Airbus celebrates the world's newest generation two engine wide-body aircraft, the A350 XWB.

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The A350 XWB final assembly line covers an area equivalent to nearly 300 tennis courts and the roof is partially covered in 22,000 square metres of photovoltaic solar panelling producing more than half of the building's energy needs.

The A350 XWB is Airbus' all new family of mid-size wide-body airliners. These highly efficient aircraft bring together the latest in aerodynamics, design and advanced technologies to provide up to 25 percent better fuel efficiency and operating costs compared to current aircraft in the same size category. Over 70 percent of the A350 XWB's weight-efficient airframe is made from advanced materials combining composites (53 percent), titanium and advanced aluminium alloys. The aircraft's innovative all-new Carbon Fibre Reinforced Plastic (CFRP) fuselage results in lower fuel burn as well as easier maintenance. The A350 XWB benefits from Airbus' high level of expertise in incorporating composite material into its aircraft.

The A350 XWB Family consists of three passenger versions with true long-range capability of flying up to 8,500nm/15,580km. In a typical three-class configuration, the A350-800 will offer 270 seats while the A350-900 and the A350-1000 will offer 314 and 350 seats respectively.

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Follow the press conference live on our website www.airbus.com. High resolution photos and the best-of summary of the A350 XWB FAL inauguration ceremony will also available.

For broadcasters:

Video on this announcement is available on www.airbus.com/broadcastroom