

Sky-Y makes sets European endurance record

The Alenia Aeronautica Sky-Y team successfully completed its second flight test campaign with a spotless eight-hour flight that set a new endurance record for European UAVs in the one-ton category.

The test campaign, flown on the Swedish range at Vidsele from September 26th to October 25th, comprised a total of 11 taxies and seven flight sorties.

The final record flight aimed to assess Sky-Y performance at maximum take-off weight and to verify its endurance in the current configuration. The flight began one hour before sunrise and comprised two photographic rendez-vous with a chase airplane. The sortie included one hour of night operations and tested operational procedures for the Ground Control Station crew, who rotated every two hours throughout the endurance flight.

The flight test campaign included some 235 scheduled test points, all of which were covered in first six flights. The test categories included four main groupings:

- Explore the flight envelope up to 125 Knots and 15,000 ft of altitude, testing handling qualities and performance
- Test the diesel engine and all on board systems within the planned envelope
- Test all basic Auto-Pilot/Auto-Throttle modes and the autonomous navigation mode
- Test Automatic Take Off & Landing (ATOL) functionalities.

First flown on 20 June 2007, Sky-Y has accumulated 20 flight hours in eight sorties, including the maiden flight.