Frecce Tricolore: In-flight Incident in Pantelleria

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On May 6, 2025, the island of Pantelleria experienced a moment of great fear during a Frecce Tricolori show. The acrobatic performance, which had just begun, was interrupted by an unexpected in-flight incident. **During one of the maneuvers, two aircraft touched each other, causing them to dangerously lose altitude. Fortunately, the extraordinary skill of the pilots prevented a tragedy.** The mayor of Pantelleria, Fabrizio D'Ancona, highlighted the courage of the pilots, who never lost control of their planes and brought them to the ground without causing harm to the public. Only one of the aircraft had a more problematic outcome: a plane went off the runway, while the pilot was taken to the hospital with a suspected fracture, later confirmed as a minor knee injury.

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The dynamics of the Frecce Tricolori incident and the hypotheses

The incident occurred during the "cardiode" acrobatic maneuver, in which four of the group's ten aircraft separated from the rest of the formation. Three planes successfully landed at Pantelleria airport, but one of them had problems with the nose wheel, which caused it to go off the runway. Initial reconstructions exclude a bird strike as the cause of the incident, but further investigations are needed to understand the precise causes of the technical problem that led to the off-runway. The Italian Air Force confirmed that the anomalous separation of the formation was handled with mastery by the pilots, who managed to perform a controlled landing despite the emergency situation.

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The memory of the Turin incident and spectator safety

This incident recalls what happened in September 2023 in Turin, where a Frecce Tricolori aircraft, hit by a flock of birds, lost control during takeoff, causing a tragedy that resulted in the death of a child. Fortunately, the Pantelleria incident did not have dramatic consequences for the public, as the spectators were at a safe distance. However, the risk was tangible, and the Italian Air Force immediately launched a thorough investigation to ascertain the causes of the technical malfunction and to prevent future incidents.

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