

Green-minded Paris Air Show takes off

June 15 2015, by Djallal Malti



A presentation of the E-Fan prototype electric aircraft at Merignac airport, southwestern France, on April 25, 2014

The world's leading air show opened Monday near the French capital with a special focus on green issues alongside the traditional sales war between Airbus and Boeing.

President Francois Hollande is set to inaugurate the week-long Paris Air Show, which is expected to draw 315,000 visitors and 2,260 exhibitors from 47 countries.

Among the aircraft making their debut will be new versions of the prototype all-electric plane from European company Airbus, the E-Fan, and its cleaner, quieter civilian helicopter, the H160.

They reflect the increasing focus on green innovations that are set to be a theme at this year's show ahead of the global climate conference being hosted in the same venue later this year and with the air industry committed to being carbon-neutral by 2020.

Rising fuel prices are a big motivator. Boeing's promise that its next mid-range carrier, the 737 MAX, will offer 20-percent fuel savings means it has already garnered more than 2,700 orders, even though it will not be unveiled until next year.

The Airbus A320neo, with a 15 percent cut in fuel consumption, has already racked up a record 3,800 pre-orders before the first one has even left the production line.

Top industry officials, government ministers and environmental experts will meet on Thursday to discuss air travel's impact on the climate, and there will be a week-long exhibition on the subject called "The Sky of Tomorrow".

Sales war

Paris is the oldest and biggest [air show](#) in the world, having first taken place in 1909.



French Prime Minister Manuel Valls sits in an H160 as he visits the Airbus helicopter factory in Marignane, southern France, on May 29, 2015

But several big manufacturers are notable by the absence this year, including Sweden's Saab and the UK-based BAE Systems, joining the US Northrup Grumman group which has not been at Le Bourget since 2011.

There are fewer planes on display this year, too, down from 150 to 100 compared with the last show in 2013.

But the sales war between big hitters Airbus and Boeing is set to be just as fierce.

Airbus pipped its US rival at the last Paris Air Show two years ago, landing sales worth a total of \$39.3 billion compared to Boeing's \$38

billion. That year's show saw the aeronautic industry land a total of \$115 billion of orders.

The market for civilian aircraft is booming.

Airbus said Friday it expects 32,600 planes to be sold industry-wide over the next 20 years.

"I don't know if it will be the record year, but it will be a good show," said Airbus boss Fabrice Bregier, looking forward to "several hundred" orders for his company.



A Boeing 737 under construction at Boeing's factory in Renton, Washington, on May 19, 2015

Boeing's Randy Tinseth said the Seattle-based company had "a lot of things in the pipeline on the mid and long-haul planes."

The industry needs between 300 and 400 sales next week to keep its production lines ticking over through 2020, said Ben Moores, a senior analyst at IHS Aerospace, Defence and Security.

The aviation sector broke records last year with 2,888 orders, according to consultancy Deloitte Global, but the the military sector is struggling with the US shedding 168,000 defence jobs since 2010.

Paris is a particularly important venue for smaller companies that have fewer chances to show off their wares.



People take pictures of the Airbus A320neo on September 25, 2014 at Blagnac airport near Toulouse, after its first test flight

Canada is desperate for sales for its C Series regional plane, which gets its world premier at the show, while Pakistan is hungry for its first-ever order for its JF-17 Thunder fighter aircraft.

The show at the Paris-Le Bourget airport north of Paris opens its doors to the public from Friday, when they will get the chance to see some 40 aircraft in flying displays each day, including fighter jets such as the JF-17, France's Rafale and Ukraine's Antonov 178.

Airbus has also confirmed it will display its A400M military transport plane for the first time since a fatal crash in Spain last month caused by a massive engine failure.

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Citation: Green-minded Paris Air Show takes off (2015, June 15) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-06-green-minded-paris-air.html>

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