

Airbus to axe 3,700 jobs in Europe

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An A400M military transporter flies past an Airbus A380 superjumbo at the International Aerospace Exhibition (ILA) in Berlin in 2010.

Aircraft giant Airbus is to axe around 3,700 jobs in Europe as it cuts back production of its troubled A380 superjumbo and A400M military transporter, the company and union officials said Wednesday.

The cuts come as Airbus downscopes deliveries of the under-selling A380—the world's biggest passenger jet—to six a year from 2020 and eight a year for the similarly problematic A400M.

The company said "up to 3,700 [jobs](#)" in France, Germany, Britain and Spain would be affected by the drop in production, without saying whether the posts were being cut or moved elsewhere.

But Force Ouvriere, the biggest union representing Airbus staff, said after a meeting with company executives that Airbus was planning to shed 3,720 jobs while avoiding outright redundancies.

"At no moment was there any discussion of outright layoffs," union leader Jean-Marc Escourrou said after the meeting at Airbus headquarters in the southwestern French city of Toulouse.

Temporary jobs and subcontractors will be the first to go, he added.

The jobs lost will include 1,900 in Germany, 850 in Spain and 470 in France.

Britain will lose 450 jobs at the Filton factory in Bristol which builds wings for the A400M, said FO official, Yvonnick Dreno.

"The falling rate for the A400M will affect them 100 percent," he said.

Airbus said in a statement that it was "committed to managing any implications for its workforce in a responsible manner".

"The company is confident that it will be able to propose opportunities to most of the affected employees through programmes which are being ramped up," it added.

Airbus had in January warned it would have to halt production of the A380 altogether unless it received new orders.

Emirates Airlines, already the biggest customer for the A380 with 101 in its fleet and 41 more on order, threw it a lifeline days later by striking a \$16-billion deal to buy 36 more of the jets.

Airbus decided in 2007 to pursue the A380, capable of packing in 853 seats—a move diametrically opposed to rival Boeing's bet on the Dreamliner, marketed as a more efficient plane that could be used for both medium and long-distance flights.

But the economics of the four-engine A380 have proved daunting, with airlines having to operate every flight at full capacity in order to make a profit.

The A400M programme has also been fraught with worries, including delivery delays and technical problems.

Airbus nevertheless said last month that record deliveries, windfall gains from divestments and favourable exchange rates had boosted profits last year, even though it took a 1.3-billion-euro (\$1.6-billion) hit from problems with the A400M.

The A400M is one of the most ambitious joint defence programmes ever launched in Europe. Seven countries are involved: Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Spain and Turkey.

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