

Safety and pollution top of the agenda as Paris Air Show opens

June 17 2019, by Joseph Schmid



The Paris Air Show kicked off with a markedly less self-congratulatory than in recent years, under the shadow of the Boeing 737 Max crisis

Aviation executives descended on the Paris Air Show on Monday with pledges to improve transparency over plane safety in the wake of the

Boeing 737 MAX crisis and to reduce emissions.

Few blockbuster products or orders are expected at the world's biggest aerospace show, which brings together nearly 2,500 firms from 49 countries, and 290 official delegations, including government leaders and military chiefs.

With passenger traffic slowing this year, the atmosphere at the fair, where arch-rivals Boeing and Airbus vie for aircraft orders, was markedly less self-congratulatory than in recent years.

President Emmanuel Macron inaugurated the event at Le Bourget airport after flying in on a hulking grey Airbus A330 refuelling tanker operated by the French Air Force.

He then attended the unveiling of a full-size model of the new fighter jet that France and Germany are promoting as a symbol of their efforts to boost European defence autonomy at a time of growing strain in ties with the United States.

The stealth [plane](#) is part of the ambitious Future Combat Air System (FCAS) that includes next-generation drones and missiles, which would help reduce the EU's long reliance on US planes and equipment.

The cooperation framework was later signed by the defence ministers of France, Germany and Spain, so far the only other EU nation to join the project, which aims to have its new plane in operation by 2040.



A full-scale model of the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) jet, which France and Germany hope to have in service by 2040, was unveiled at the opening of the Paris Air Show on Monday

"European countries tend to buy American. We're offering a European plane for Europeans, independent of American technologies," Dassault Aviation CEO Eric Trappier, whose firm is building the plane alongside Airbus, told CNews television earlier Monday.

Macron then toured the vast exhibition halls at Le Bourget, where dozens of companies are touting their efforts to make flying cleaner amid criticism of airlines' carbon emissions.

Airbus officially unveiled its A321 XLR jet, the latest iteration of its hugely popular single-aisle A320, which can now cross the Atlantic

thanks to increased [fuel efficiency](#).

That makes it an option for airlines which currently have to use bigger, fuel-hungry twin-aisle planes on longer routes.

The US-based Air Lease Corporation has signed a letter of intent to buy 27 of the planes, with deliveries to start in 2023.



French President Emmanuel Macron sits between Defence Minister Florence Parly, left, and Dassault Aviation chief executive Eric Trappier at the Paris Air Show in Le Bourget, France, on Monday

Boeing on the backfoot

Executives at Airbus's archrival Boeing faced a fresh barrage of questions about its handling of the 737 MAX crisis, following the two deadly crashes since October which together claimed 346 lives.

"We want to leave no stone unturned" in the investigations into an anti-stall system suspected of causing the crashes, Boeing's head of commercial airplanes Kevin McAllister told journalists on Monday.

Critics accuse Boeing of failing to properly test a system that used just one sensor to determine if the 737 was at risk of stalling, and of failing to adequately inform and train pilots on its use.

McAllister said the update would use two sensors, but it has yet to submit a fix to regulators, who have grounded the plane indefinitely.

"We are very confident that the three layers of protection we are planning with the software update will prevent anything like this happening again," McAllister said.



Boeing's head of commercial airplanes Kevin McAllister said the company is "doing everything" to get the Max 373s safely back in service

He also vowed that any lessons learned from the inquiries into why the new system failed to attract the attention of safety regulators would be applied across Boeing's civil and defence operations.

"Our priority is doing everything to get this plane safely returned to service. It is a pivotal moment for all of us," he said.

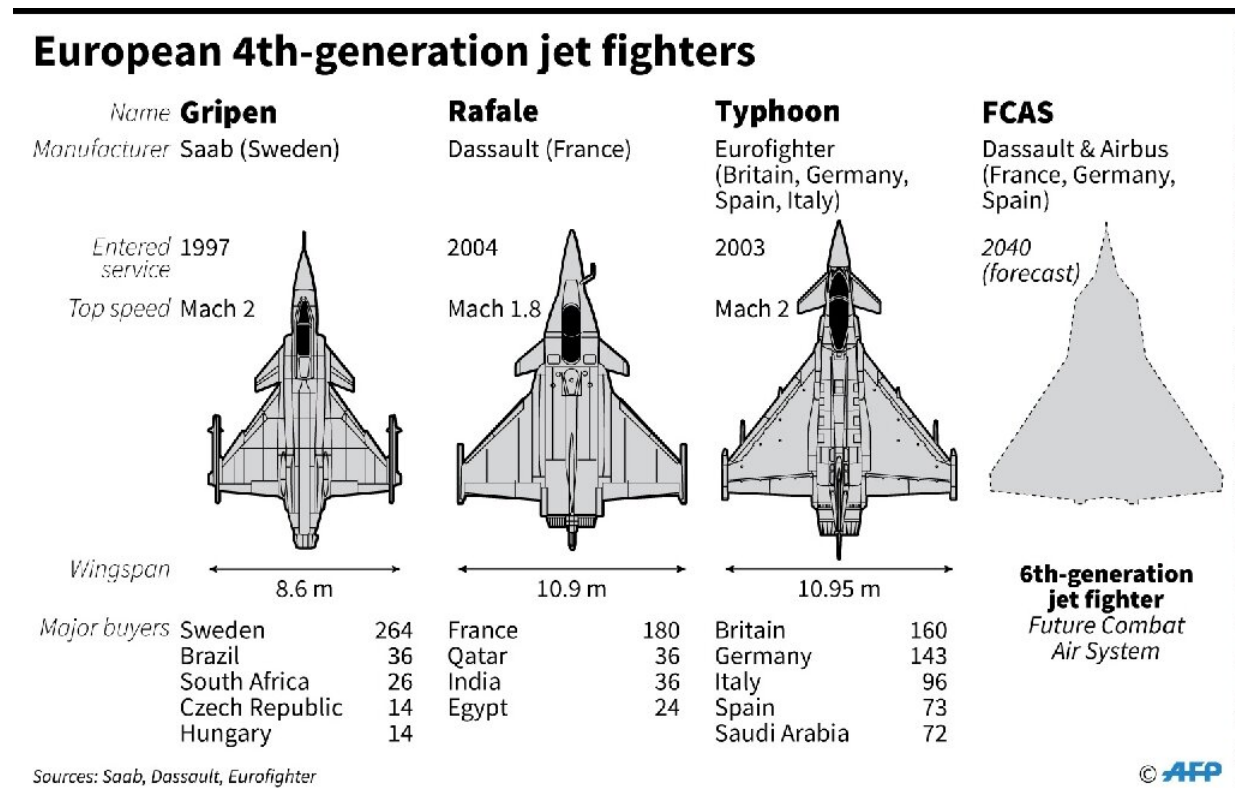
Boeing has estimated the crisis will cost it \$1 billion, but the bill is likely

to climb the longer the planes stay on the ground.

Boeing now has 140 737 MAXs parked on its tarmac waiting for delivery, and has had to reduce monthly production to 42 planes from 52.

Short-term turbulence

Both Airbus and Boeing have suffered a wave of order cancellations as airlines grapple with slowing passenger traffic growth since the start of this year.



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And air cargo shipments, often an indicator of passenger traffic trends, have been slumping so far in 2019, reflecting the trade tensions prompted by US President Donald Trump's move to impose tariffs on several European and Chinese imports.

If the aviation market continues to soften, Airbus and Boeing could suffer their first disappointing year after more than a decade of solid growth driven in particular by the soaring numbers of people flying in Asia.

The two industry leaders can take comfort from jam-packed order books after hefty revenue growth last year, when their combined deliveries exceeded 1,600 planes.

Analysts say nearly 40,000 planes will be in service by 2038, double the industry's current fleet.

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