

Call for papers for the international workshop “Birth and affirmation of the Airbus group (1960s-1980s)”, Toulouse (France), 18th-20th march 2020

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TEXTE

1. Introduction

- 1 In 2020, the “Groupement d'intérêt économique” Airbus will celebrate its 50th anniversary. Founded on 18 December 1970, the consortium's objective is to coordinate the execution of a multilateral industrial cooperation programme which was launched in July 1967. Intended to facilitate the marketing of the jointly produced aircraft, this project involved several countries (Spain (1971), France, Great Britain (1979), Netherlands (1970), West Germany) and their firms (Aérospatiale, Deutsche Airbus, Casa, British Aerospace Hawker-Siddeley, Fokker-VFW, etc.) in the construction of the A300. This is the first time in the history of civil aviation that several countries joined forces to design, manufacture and market an aircraft, except for Concorde, which is the result of an isolated collaboration between two nations.
- 2 This highly challenging project was quickly confronted with the difficulty of entering markets in a sector in which there were multiple barriers and in which the United States had a decisive influence. The creation of a coordination structure seemed to be a response to the

commercial, political and industrial challenges that emerged from this international collaboration in the civil aviation field. After a long period of stagnation and economic crisis that persisted until the 1980s, Airbus finally became an undeniable commercial success, placing it in direct competition with Boeing. The international workshop scheduled at the Toulouse University between 18 and 20 March 2020 aims to contribute to a better understanding of the many issues (economic, social, technical, cultural, political, etc.) linked to the development of the Airbus project between the 1960s and the 1980s. The objective is to describe more precisely the key elements and the most important steps of the project.

- 3 The duopoly built with Boeing is most certainly the result of economic, technical, political, social or organisational developments that must be examined fifty years later. By adopting an original perspective and by assembling a plurality of contributors from various disciplines, witnesses and actors of these times, the objective is to revisit the major challenges faced by the actors in this innovative international industrial collaboration operation. This emblematic European initiative, which is the result of strategic political choices, questions Europe's place in high-tech industries, and strategies deployed by countries and manufacturers for developing aeronautics programs. The objective is also to understand more clearly how the partners, have managed to cooperate in order to face the challenge of American competition, and to develop projects that are symbolic of the success of an industrial Europe.
- 4 The aim of this workshop, which focuses more specifically on the birth and first decades of Airbus' history, is to continue the work that was initiated during the 1990s¹. Understanding the emergence of industrial strategies as part of this multilateral international cooperation operation is a central focus. Four main thematic topics are proposed, but all proposals related to the development of the project will be considered.

1.1 Spatial development and construction of an industrial Europe

- 5 The Airbus project is an important field of experimentation in the construction of an industrial Europe. Exploring this dimension re-

mains a major issue for the organizers of the workshop. A better comprehension of the dynamics of industrial cooperation by reintegrating it into its various spaces, and in particular into spatial development, can be a key focus for analysis.

1.2 Projects and their technical ramifications

- 6 The Airbus A300 is a wide-body twin-engine aircraft, the first of its generation. If it obtained its flight certification in 1974, it was not until the following decade, and more precisely 1982, that Boeing entered into a competition with the B767. The year after was marked by the entry into service of the A310, derived from the A300, with a longer operating range. The aim is to examine the technical implications and programmatic aspects of the cooperation carried out in the framework of Airbus.

1.3 The actors involved in this partnership

- 7 Although the project is managed by France, the components assembled come from engineering and manufacturing sites located in the partner countries. The complexity of this industrial structure has consequences for the execution of programs. Regions, firms and workers must consider the changes in the productive system at local, national and international level, in order to ensure that the projects carried out can be developed under the most favourable conditions. The challenges are multiple for the numerous actors involved in this international cooperation initiative. Understanding their contribution is certainly one of the central issues of this international workshop.

1.4 And in other cases? And after?

- 8 Far from being limited to the Airbus example, participants will also be able to focus on other experiences that develop in parallel in space and time. Airbus is part of a complex and highly internationalized industrial structure and has to face many challenges. While they may appear at first sight external, they are in reality fundamental to the

understanding of the logics of world aviation. The primary partners and suppliers of the companies involved in Airbus, may also be involved in the call. Finally, while the organizers wish to focus primarily on the first decades of Airbus, they do not intend to ignore later developments or long-term analysis.

2. Organizing Committee

Magali Brunet (Université Toulouse - III - Paul Sabatier, CEMES-CNRS)

Philippe Jean-Amans (Université Toulouse - Jean Jaurès, Framespa)

Clair Juilliet (Université Toulouse - Jean Jaurès, Framespa)

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Jean-Marc Olivier (Université Toulouse - Jean Jaurès, Framespa)

Fabienne Péris-Raimbault (Musée Aeroscopia, Manatour, Toulouse-Blagnac)

Marc-Daniel Seiffert (Université de Reims, Framespa)

3. Submission requirements and deadlines

- 9 The abstracts, in French or English, must be sent to the organizing committee before 31 August 2019. (300 words or 2,000 signs). They will be accompanied by a short CV of the authors. A reply will be sent before 30 September 2019 to confirm the approval or refusal of the proposition.
- 10 A first version of the papers, in English or French, shall be sent to the organizing committee before 31 December 2019 (7,000 words, 50,000 signs). A publication of the papers is planned to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary, at the end of 2020. We would like to insist on the engagement of the authors to produce their texts within the given deadlines.

4. Contact

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NOTES

¹ See for example CHADEAU Emmanuel (dir.), *Airbus, un succès industriel européen. Industrie française et coopération européenne (1965-1972)*, Actes du colloque du 23 juin 1994, Paris, Éditions Rive Droite, Histoire industrielle, 1995, 182 p. ; BURIGANA David, DELOGE Pascal (dir.), *L'Europe des coopérations aéronautiques*, Armand Colin, Paris, 128 p.