



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Aviation subcontractors flying high

The 4500 suppliers working for France's aviation industry are enjoying a great boom which is encouraging them to recruit staff on a massive scale. While certain subcontractors are very long-standing, others are new arrivals on the scene and are taking off fast.



Never have there been so few clouds in the sky for France's aviation subcontractors. The turnover of businesses in the aviation, space and defence sectors grew 16% in 2012 to total €42.5 billion. Better still, three quarters of this income came from exports.

Most major contracts are signed by aircraft manufacturers, helicopter builders and missile, satellite and launcher producers, as well as the designers of electronic systems. But companies like Airbus, ATR, Arianespace, Dassault, Safran, Snecma and Thales also provide work for close to 4500 suppliers in France. These subcontractors are fully enjoying the growth of their customers. Their turnover too grew by 16% in 2012, reaching €12.7 billion and current orders are worth close to a year of income at €12.3 billion.

To respond to global demand for French-made aircraft and technologies, businesses in the industry recruited close to 15,000 people over 2012. In total, the French aerospace industry represents 310,000 employees according to figures from the French Aerospace Industries Group (*Groupement des industries françaises aéronautiques et spatiales* – GIFAS). More than a third of these staff work in the Île-de-France region around Paris (35%), although the Midi Pyrénées region and particularly the agglomeration of Toulouse, which boasts several Airbus sites, are major employment areas for this industry (25%). The personnel in this sector are also very qualified, with more than a third of them (37%) having engineering training or being employed as an executive.



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Many subcontractors have accumulated vast experience over the decades. Long better known to the public for its inflatable boats, Zodiac was established in... 1896! Its founder, Maurice Mallet, was to develop and produce the first airships for sport and tourism. This group, which boasts 30,000 staff, is now a world leader in aerospace equipment and systems for commercial, regional and business aircraft, as well as helicopters. Its seats, flight commands and galleys now earn it an annual turnover of €3.9 billion.



But the industry is not the preserve of large subcontractors with a very long history. Thus the company Satinox Assemblage, Europe's leader in fasteners for the aviation, space and military industries, was set up in 2000 by a daring entrepreneur named Patrick Mitchell. The self-taught entrepreneur made the rather wild gamble just 14 years ago of buying out a failing SME specialized in standard fasteners, making it a specialist in high added-value fastenings. Its products are notably used to ensure missiles remain attached to the wings of aircraft and satellites remain in orbit around Earth without disintegrating. It is now a trusted partner of "great" manufacturers including Thales, Safran, EADS and Zodiac Aerospace. Success does not depend on age...



Marco Rangi

Key figures in the French aviation industry:

- . Turnover of €42.5 million in 2012
- . 75% of turnover represented by exports
- . Leading export sector and the leader in terms of trade surplus, with more than €20 billion
- . 4500 suppliers
- . 310,000 employees