

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3261/06
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to the Commission

Subject: Airbus crisis

The aeronautical industry is a technological leader not only within Europe but worldwide. Community policies aim to create a more competitive Europe based on innovation, research and knowledge. The crisis the aeronautics consortium EADS and its subsidiary Airbus are undergoing threatens the stability and, as a result, the credibility of their entrepreneurial venture. In the midst of a number of scandals, Airbus acknowledged its inability to fulfil its industrial commitments, announcing delays in the delivery of its new aircraft, the A380, which is crucial to allowing it to gain market shares from its biggest competitor, Boeing. These circumstances have triggered a 26% drop in Airbus's exchange quotation, accompanied by the resulting economic losses and damage to its image. The compensation payments to airlines that will not receive their order on time come to an estimated EUR 3000 million alone.

It has become known that some of the problems causing the delays were technological. Given that the A380 was partly financed using the Community's Research and Development funds:

Are the technical problems encountered with the A380 connected to the implementation of any of the projects funded by the Framework Programme? If so, have any measures been envisaged to alleviate these difficulties?

To what extent might the problems experienced by EADS/Airbus affect the smooth running of projects in the aeronautical industry financed by the Framework Programme or by other Community funds?

Will the Commission reconsider its support strategy? Will it extend the scope of its measures in this regard in the Seventh Framework Programme?

Does the Commission plan to take any steps to strengthen Airbus's position as European leader in this segment of the aeronautical sector globally?

Is it possible that similar problems (management-related delays) are occurring in that other key European programme, Galileo?