

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5534/08
by Anne Laperrouze (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Subcontracting in the aviation sector

Over the last twenty years, two main industrial trends have emerged among the 7 000 or so sub-contractors in the European aviation sector:

- 'capacity subcontracting' offering additional capacity within the core activities of large industrial groups and generally carried out 'in situ',
- 'speciality subcontracting' to produce and deliver a product on the basis of an identified need. Formerly in the minority, the number of partners involved is increasing every day through the transfer of activities by large industrial groups.

In the field of research, the Research and Development Framework Programme (FP) favours the core activities of large industrial groups and their capacity subcontractors. The results of the first two calls for proposals in the Transport Programme, Aeronautics section, of the 7th Framework Programme confirm this trend which ignores specialised SMEs, their needs and their key industrial qualities: innovation and risk-taking.

Anticipating this situation, the NMP (Nanosciences, nanotechnologies, materials and new production technologies) programme earmarks a section of its work programme for SMEs with the focus on the short term, the product and a small budget.

Could a similar tool be introduced for the aviation sector so that innovation and risk-taking by SMEs in the sector can be promoted in the FP work programmes, the CleanSky Joint Technology Initiative and the SESAR Joint Undertaking?