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MISSION REPORT

following the Mission to Toulouse, France on 20 October 2023

Committee on International Trade

Members of the mission:

Marie-Pierre Vedrenne

Sven Simon

Geert Bourgeois

Helmut Scholz

Arnaud Danjean

(Renew) (Leader of the mission)

(EPP)

(ECR)

(The Left)

(EPP)

Introduction

The Committee on International Trade (“INTA”) visited Toulouse, France, on 20 October 2023. During the one-day program, INTA Members visited the headquarters of one of the EU flagship companies – Airbus, where they discussed the priorities of the EU international trade agenda. The Members met also representatives of Toulouse City Hall and had the opportunity to discuss the trade partnerships with the authorities of Blagnac Airport.

The mission focused on two key topics: supply chain diversification and adaptation to international competition. The agenda covered as well research and innovation, including aligning with new climate sustainability standards

Summary account of meetings

The visit to the **Toulouse City Hall** allowed INTA Members to meet Vice-President of Toulouse Metropole and Deputy Mayor of Toulouse responsible for international affairs and the Deputy Mayor of Toulouse responsible for relations with economic players. The discussions focused mainly on aspects relevant to international trade, specifically on the means at the disposal of the local authorities to attract investments without falling into the trap of naivety, the implementation of public market rules and public calls for tender and the green and digital transition of the local economy. Members also inquired the authorities on their relations with foreign investors, on the evolution of economic models or the ways of protecting critical and strategic infrastructures in their area of competence.

The visit to **Airbus headquarters** in Toulouse, a leading European company in the design, manufacturing and supply of aerospace products, services and solutions on a global scale proved to be the perfect opportunity to assess the effects of the existing and upcoming legislation on the European businesses. The visit included meetings with Airbus Chief Executive Officer, Vice-President and Head of European and NATO Affairs and Vice-President responsible for 'Zero-Emission Aircraft'. Additionally, the INTA mission had a unique opportunity to visit the final A321 assembly line.

The meetings covered a broad range of topics in the context of current international trade agenda and focused on company's strategy for the future, which is centred around the decarbonization of its aeronautics products, as well as on its efforts to maintain global leadership in the sector, against the new arrivals on the global market. The INTA mission was also briefed about Airbus' efforts to build, by 2035, the world's first hydrogen-powered commercial aircraft (the ZEROe project), the diversification of their products and targeted sectors (civil, defensive, space), as well as about the value and supply chains. The challenge of ensuring an appropriate level of investments and the technological leap necessary to guarantee the green and digital transition was also highlighted.

One of very pertinent topics for INTA representatives was also EU-USA trade relations and the level of implementation of the agreement on a cooperation framework between Airbus and Boeing, following the 2021 agreement between the EU and the US regarding the WTO Airbus-Boeing dispute.

At the **Blagnac-Toulouse Airport**, the INTA mission met the Chief Executive Officer, Commercial, Communication and Customers Director, Corporate Social Responsibility & Human Resources Director and Engineering and Innovation Director.

The discussion included the following topics: protection of strategic infrastructure and careful attention to the origin of commercial offers, screening of incoming investments, the acceleration of the race towards digitalization and the development of business models aimed at reducing coal emissions, the criteria for public procurement, which also integrate the sustainability and circular economy dimension, and the various projects concerning SAF (Sustainable aviation fuel). In the current global geopolitical and economic context, INTA Members gained important insights from the past experiences of the company with foreign investments and their possible impact on the economic security and strategic infrastructure, given that it is the sixth largest French airport.

Conclusions and follow up

The mission was very useful, allowing the Members to have a first-hand understanding of the reality on the ground of one of the most successful pan-European company. It also proved the need of strengthening ties with all stakeholders, emphasising the importance of bilateral discussions in advancing the competitiveness and the imperative need to safeguard EU strategic infrastructure inter alia by means of foreign investment screening. INTA Members were able to take stock of the trade-related and economic challenges and opportunities, including of the benefits and shortages of recent trade-related Union legislation for flagship companies and regional authorities.

The mission was of great value for the INTA Committee, which will continue to scrutinise any relevant developments in mentioned areas and will continue to monitor closely the possible effects of existing or future European legislation on economic operators or public local or regional authorities and will reflect the conclusions in its work on future revisions of concerned legislation. The reporting back from the mission took place on 28 November 2023, during the INTA committee meeting. This mission report will be publicly available on INTA's website.

INTA Mission to Toulouse, France

20 October 2023

FINAL PROGRAMME

08.45-09.15	Courtesy visit to the Toulouse City Hall and meeting and breakfast with the Deputy Mayors in charge of international affairs and relations with economic operators
10.00-10.30	Welcome to Airbus by Senior Vice President, Head of EU & Nato Affairs
10.45- 11.30	ZeroE presentation by Airbus Vice President in charge of Zero-Emission Aircraft
11.45-12.30	Guided tour of A321 Final Assembly Line
12.45-13.15	Meeting with Airbus Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and other members of the Executive Committee
13.15-14.00	Working lunch hosted by Airbus executives
14.45-16.30	Meeting with Blagnac-Toulouse Airport Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Commercial, Communication and Customers Director, the Corporate Social Responsibility & Human Resources Director and the Engineering and Innovation Director
16.30	End of programme and departure