

Press Release

2024 Results: The French aerospace sector regains pre-Covid levels thanks to unprecedented industrial mobilisation

Paris, 6 May 2025 – The industry has at last recovered to pre-Covid levels, driven by strong demand in both the civil and defence sectors, particularly in export sales. GIFAS urges for preserving a competitive environment to secure these achievements and prepare for the future.

A few weeks ahead of the International Paris Air Show, the French Aerospace Industries Association, GIFAS, has presented the 2024 results, reflecting a continuously resilient industry.

With total sales reaching **€77.7 billion**, up by **10%** from 2023, the sector has now surpassed its pre-crisis level, but remains sensitive in constant euros due to the cumulative inflation of almost 18% over the last five years. This performance is the result of the exceptional efforts made across the sector, from major prime contractors to small businesses.

Exports driving growth in both civil and military sales

Civil aeronautics accounts for 74% of sales (€57.4 bn), thanks to an increase in deliveries. The defence sector, meanwhile, climbs **13% to €20.3 bn**, driven by growth in export deliveries (+19%) and in the domestic market (+11%). This momentum was accompanied by a sharp increase in **total orders to €74.8 bn (+5%)**, driven by a **77% surge** in defence exports, which offsets a **33% decline** in orders from the French Ministry for the Armed Forces and stable demand in the civil sector.

Export sales are today vital: **82% of total sales** are international, representing **€51.2 bn**. This ability to capture global markets is built on offering competitive, dependable products tailored to operational requirements. GIFAS supported **more than 100 firms** in 2024, through trade exhibitions and international missions.

This international orientation also exposes the industry to geopolitical uncertainties and trade tensions, including tariffs and technology transfer issues. **GIFAS therefore advocates for an increase in public procurement**, particularly in the space and defence sectors, to support a resilient model capable of withstanding external shocks.

A committed supply chain, but still under pressure

Although the supply chain is stabilising, it continues to be affected by the lingering impacts of the health crisis, persistent tensions in the supply of raw materials – such as titanium, special steels, and components – and high operating costs in France due to labour, energy and taxation pressures. Thanks to active mediation and internal mutual support, **no critical default was recorded in 2024**, despite the 80 sensitive cases managed.

During the year, GIFAS reinforced its tools: the AAP1 fund, established in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, successfully achieved its objective of strengthening the sector's resilience. Its successor, AAP2, is now in place and will continue the initiatives aimed at supporting and reinforcing the supply chain, while ensuring the ramp-up in production.

The **Aéro Excellence** programme initiated in early 2024 provides a **shared assessment standard** for firms in the sector and is now used by all the prime contractors. In practical terms, it supports an overall improvement in industrial performance: **111 companies and 164 industrial sites** have joined the programme, which is now expanding internationally through *Aéro Excellence International*. This organisation, which already includes the UK and Germany, **aims to elevate it to a global standard**.

A recovery underpinned by employment and training

In 2024, the sector recruited **29,000 people across all qualification levels**, including **6,000 sandwich students**. **Net job creation therefore totalled 12,000**, compared with 20,500 net jobs created across French industry as a whole the same year¹. The total headcount has now reached **222,000 employees**, up from 202,000 in 2019.

In addition to recruitment, the sector has fully embraced the question of training. More than **30% of employees have been replaced since 2022**. The challenge lies in supporting the skills development of the many young people and job seekers who have recently joined the workforce, amid increasingly demanding qualification requirements.

Confirm achievements and anticipate risks

While the 2024 results demonstrate the sector's **potential to drive reindustrialisation, employment, and sovereignty**, they also serve as a warning against assuming that the recovery is firmly secured.

To consolidate it, GIFAS reiterates its **recommendations**:

1. Maintain CORAC² funding at €300M per year in 2026 and 2027;
2. Support the development of a sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) sector, to achieve the industry's decarbonisation goals and minimise our energy dependency;
3. Maintain both the Research Tax Credit and Innovation Tax Credit, because research and technology are vital to our industry;
4. Implement the multi-year Defence Spending Law (LPM), to provide industry with the sustained orders needed to develop and deliver the capabilities required by the armed forces;
5. Loosen the regulatory stranglehold, ahead of the 2026 Finance Bill, which should refrain from adding to the sector's already record-high taxation to avoid the risk of generating irreversible effects for its competitiveness;
6. And also create the conditions conducive to a competitive, autonomous European space sector, with technological and strategic roadmaps developed jointly by the responsible ministries with industry.

Safeguard the strategic space sector

With sales reaching **€4.76 bn in 2024 – a modest increase of 2.6%** – the space sector remains under pressure in a global market dominated by U.S. manufacturers. Nonetheless, **France maintains its position as the world's leading satellite exporter**, supported by a comprehensive value chain and top-

¹ According to the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, INSEE

² A joint State-Industry consultative body dedicated to the implementation of the national research program for the French aerospace sector

tier equipment suppliers. Exports represent over half of the sector's revenue, accounting for 53% of total sales.

A true European space ambition is now necessary, to strengthen this inherently dual-use sector's competitiveness, attractiveness and ability to compete internationally. Europe's space industrial base is globally unique, and it must now become **fully autonomous**. Recent programmes, such as IRIS², demonstrate Europe's ability to take initiative when efforts are successfully coordinated. GIFAS calls for the **definition of a stronger European ambition in the space sector at the upcoming ESA Ministerial Conference in November**.

"The industry did not inherit its achievements in 2024; it earned them. To sustain this momentum, we need a strategically engaged French government, a united Europe with shared priorities, and a stable regulatory and fiscal environment. Now is not the time to ease our efforts, but to accelerate them," comments Guillaume Faury, President of GIFAS.

"To remain competitive, our industry must counterbalance a challenging environment that impacts competitiveness through operational excellence. This approach is sustainable only because the sector is united, responsive, and fully committed to its industrial performance. And firms can only achieve this within a stable framework," states Didier Kayat, President of the GIFAS Equipment Group.

"Recruitment represents a huge but stimulating challenge. Our sector proves that it can be met, offering concrete, long-term, and motivating opportunities to thousands of talented individuals across France. Behind every hire lies an ambition: to collectively build the aerospace industry of tomorrow," concludes Clémentine Gallet, President of the GIFAS AERO-SME Committee.

About GIFAS: The French Aerospace Industries Association (GIFAS) is an industry body that brings together some 517 companies ranging from main prime contractors and system suppliers to SMEs and startups. They form a cohesive, hard-driving high-technology sector specializing in the design, development, construction, marketing and maintenance of all aeronautical and space programmes and equipment, both civilian and military planes and defence and security systems.

GIFAS, an industry whose 2024 sales amounted to €77.7bn: 82% of its consolidated sales accounted for exports. It directly employs 222,000 people.

Every two years, GIFAS organizes the Paris-Le Bourget International Air Show, the world's top event of its kind. The 55th Paris-Le Bourget Air Show will run from 16 to 22 June 2025.

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