

Press Release

2026 New Year Greetings from GIFAS: as the aerospace industry returns to full capacity, GIFAS calls for clear choices for the future in a demanding environment

Paris, January 8th, 2026 – At its New Year press address, marking the first speech by its new President, Olivier Andriès, the French Aerospace Industries Association GIFAS underlined the strategic importance of the French aerospace industry as a pillar of the nation's industrial and technological sovereignty. In an unstable and increasingly competitive international environment, the sector plays a key role in both the French economy and national employment. With a substantial order backlog, it is moving into 2026 with confidence. At the same time, GIFAS sets out clear expectations for greater visibility, stability and coherent policy decisions, to ensure the sector remains among the world's leading performers.

After returning to full industrial capacity in 2025, the sector is entering 2026 with confidence, supported by exceptionally strong global demand representing almost ten years' worth of orders, and a solid industrial base. This confidence, however, is contingent on several essential conditions to ensure the sector remains at the forefront of global competition – notably greater visibility underpinned by a long-term outlook, more stability, and ongoing support for innovation.

"France has one of the world's leading aerospace industries. But to remain at that level, we need visibility and stability in public policy decisions," commented **Olivier Andriès, President of GIFAS.**

A Sector Benefiting from Strong Global Momentum

In 2025, global air traffic exceeded five billion passengers while airline revenues surpassed the USD 1 trillion mark, confirming the strength and durability of the civil aviation sector's recovery.

The defense sector is also experiencing sustained growth, both in France and internationally, driven by increased budgets and evolving European strategic priorities. In this context, however, GIFAS has expressed concern over the absence of a 2026 budget, despite the significant step-up planned under the multi-year Defense Spending Law (LPM) to support the ramp-up of France's defense technological and industrial base (DTIB).

In the space sector, the Ministerial Council meeting held in Bremen confirmed a financial commitment of over €22 billion for the European Space Agency (ESA) over the 2026-2028 period, including €3.7 billion for France. This funding particularly secures the operational deployment of Ariane 6, which has already completed four successful commercial flights in less than 18 months – an unprecedented global achievement.

A Resilient, Cohesive and Value-Creating Industry

To address these challenges, the sector can rely on strong industrial capabilities and closer cooperation across the value chain, bringing together prime contractors, mid-sized companies and SMEs. After several years of recovery, the industry has not only returned to, but now exceeded, its pre-crisis level of activity.

According to the annual survey conducted in cooperation with the Banque de France, activity across the supply chain – including equipment manufacturers and SMEs – increased by 10% over the past year. Employment levels now exceed those of 2019, while overall profitability has improved. These results reflect the renewed strength of the industrial ecosystem, although continued vigilance remains necessary in certain vulnerable segments.

To accompany this momentum, GIFAS has strengthened its support and strategic steering mechanisms, notably through its Watch Tower, dedicated Task Forces, and the Aero Excellence program, which focuses on operational excellence, cybersecurity and environmental performance, and is now being deployed internationally. *“Supporting our companies is not a cost; it is an investment in our country’s industrial sovereignty,”* stressed **Olivier Andriès**.

This return to full industrial capacity was clearly illustrated at the 2025 International Paris Air Show, the world’s largest aerospace trade fair, organized in France by GIFAS. With 140,000 trade visitors, 165,000 members of the general public and nearly 2,500 exhibitors from 48 countries, the event highlighted the French industry’s unique ability to design and manufacture the full range of civil, defense and space systems, at one of the highest technological levels worldwide.

Employment and Expertise: A Sector Recruiting Nationwide

The aerospace industry remains one of France’s leading industrial employers, recruiting across all skill levels and throughout the country. In 2024, GIFAS member companies recruited 29,000 people, bringing total direct employment to 222,000 jobs. Over the same period, GIFAS member companies created a net 14,000 jobs, increasing their workforce by 5%. While consolidated figures for 2025 will be published next May, current estimates already place recruitment for the year at between 25,000 and 30,000 hirings.

This momentum nevertheless comes with several structural challenges: sustaining support for work-study and apprenticeship programs, ensuring closer alignment between skills and industrial needs, and continuing to increase the representation of women in the sector. Addressing these challenges is essential to maintaining the industry’s attractiveness and long-term sustainability.

Looking Ahead to Remain at the Highest International Level

In the face of increasingly intense international competition, the industry must preserve its capacity to invest, innovate and export. The successful decarbonization of aviation, the security of supply chains, full command of critical technologies and the protection of European design authority therefore stand out as key challenges for the years ahead.

To enable both France and Europe to remain leading aerospace and defense powers, GIFAS calls for clear policy decisions and makes four key recommendations for 2026:

1. **Provide greater visibility and stability for long-term investment**, in particular by guaranteeing CORAC funding at €300 million per year in 2026 and 2027, maintaining the Research Tax Credit, and ensuring continued financing through the France 2030 program.
2. **Adapt taxation to industrial realities**, in order to foster productive investment, employment and the energy transition.
3. **Secure the supply chain and its funding**, by facilitating access to long-term financing and guaranteeing access to stable, competitive energy supplies.
4. **Build a genuine European strategy for technological sovereignty**, aimed at securing critical inputs, protecting strategic assets and strengthening industrial value chains.

A Forward-Looking Industry

In closing his address, the President of GIFAS reaffirmed his determination and confidence in the sector's ability to prepare for the future and rise to the challenges of decarbonization – described as aviation's fourth revolution – as well as competitiveness and industrial and technological sovereignty.

The announcement of GIFAS's support for the documentary project HOPE, dedicated to the life of French astronaut Sophie Adenot and scheduled for release in early 2027, illustrates the industry's collective commitment to inspiring younger generations to engage with a sector of the future, particularly through scientific and technical careers.

"The French aerospace industry has all the assets it needs to succeed in both civil and defense markets: talented people, expertise, technologies and a strong collective capacity for mobilization. We therefore enter 2026 with confidence, but also with clear expectations — confidence in the strength of our industry and in its ability to innovate and adapt; and expectations for coherent, sustainable decisions to prepare the industrial choices that will shape the decades ahead," concluded **Olivier Andriès**.

About GIFAS

The French Aerospace Industries Association (GIFAS) is an industry body that brings together some 529 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.

Members as of 9 October 2025: 17 aircraft and system manufacturers, 162 equipment suppliers (GEADS – Group of Aerospace, Defence and Space Equipment Manufacturers), 233 SMEs (AERO-SME Committee), 100 startups (StartAir), 16 associate members and 2 service companies.

GIFAS, an industry whose 2024 sales amounted to €77.7bn, with 74% in civil aviation and 26% in defence. As the leading contributor to France's positive foreign trade balance, the sector generates 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 56th Paris-Le Bourget Air Show will run from 14 to 20 June 2027.

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