

Airbus beats Boeing with record sales in 2013

TOULOUSE, FRANCE: European aircraft manufacturer Airbus beat US rival Boeing with record sales and orders last year but came second in terms of finished airliners delivered, figures from the company showed.



Airbus has outperformed Boeing in terms of deliveries in 2013 as orders for the new A320neo keep streaming in. Image: Airbus

Airbus said that in 2013 it took 1,503 orders, allowing for cancellations. This compares with 1,355 orders taken by Boeing. Total orders taken by Airbus is a record for the whole industry.

Airbus also said that at the end of last year it had record orders to build 5,559 aircraft, equivalent to eight years of production.

Results published by Boeing on 6 January showed that the US firm had a total order book for 5,080 aircraft.

However, last year Airbus delivered 626 planes, trailing behind Boeing which delivered 648 aircraft. In 2012, Boeing had beaten Airbus in terms of orders and deliveries.

For 2014, Airbus chief executive Fabrice Bregier said that the company is targeting booking at least 626 orders and that it had increased its catalogue prices for aircraft by 2.6% as from January.

Airbus' parent company Airbus Group, formerly known as EADS, publishes its annual results at the end of February.

Bregier said that the company was considering increasing production of its best-selling plane, the Airbus A320 which is popular with low-cost airlines, to satisfy global demand for medium-range aircraft.

"If the market remains positive, if the customer needs more aircraft, I think we would be silly not to increase production," he told journalists.

Airbus is producing 42 A320 aircraft per month and had said that it did not want to increase this rate of production until it had converted to producing the latest, more fuel-efficient version, the A320neo.

The first A320neo is due to be delivered in 2015.

With the passenger air traffic growing by five percent a year and greater fuel economy promised by the A320neo and a new versions of Boeing aircraft, there has been strong demand from airlines to update their fleets.

"We believe there is a potential to go higher than (the) production rate of 42," Bregier said.

He said that after 2018, when the company has moved to the neo aircraft, we know that we will increase production again," he added.

Airbus won orders for 377 A320 planes last year and has taken more than 1 000 orders since for the A320neo.

Boeing plans to increase the rate of production of its 737, the competitor to the A320, from 42 per month currently to 47 in 2017.



Boeing's production of its 737 range of aircraft is likely to increase in 2014 as strong demand for the 737-900 remains. Image: [FS Pilot Shop](#)

Airbus chief operating officer John Leahy said the company was also considering offering more fuel-efficient engines for its best-selling long-range aircraft, the A330, as a number of airlines including low-cost airline Air Asia has recently urged.

Bregier said no new engines were currently being offered to clients, and even without them updates being made to the plane would keep it competitive.

The company has two variations of the aircraft in development.

One, to be delivered from 2015, will be able to carry more fuel to give it longer range, and has already been ordered by US airline Delta. The second, a regional version aimed at the Chinese and Indian markets, reduces the range but increases the seats to 400.

Airbus says this A330 should cost the same as a medium-range aircraft but have twice the number of seats.

Bregier says new engines were heavier than current models and cost more to maintain, so they were not completely advantageous.

Leahy said the Airbus was also looking at increasing the passenger capacity of its new long-haul A350, which is due to be delivered to the first clients later this year.

A small increase from 276 passengers would put the aircraft in the same category as Boeing's 787-9, which carries up to 290 passengers.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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