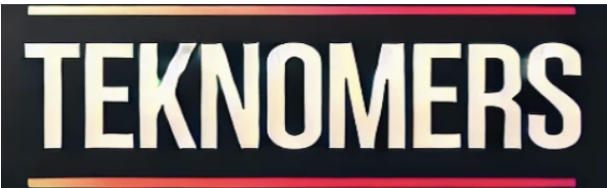




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Airbus is about to finalize a new massive order in China, according to the SCMP. The timing couldn't be worse for Boeing.



By technologists
JUL 17, 2025



Airbus is about to strengthen its presence in one of the world's most strategic markets: China. According to a report in the South China Morning Post, the European company is about to sign a new agreement with Chinese authorities that could include between 100 and 200 new aircraft. This contract could be finalized this month, but what's really attracting attention is not only the size of the order, but also the timing.

This operation coincides with the summit between the European Union and China, which will take place on July 24 and 25, as revealed by Politico. It is a high-level diplomatic meeting intended to ease trade tensions, redefine relations between Brussels and Beijing, as well as manage an increasingly tense climate in their relations with Washington. The fact that Airbus manages to conclude a contract of this magnitude in this context is indicative of a potential turning point in civil aviation.

A new balance in the Chinese skies?

The current aircraft order situation in this country seems favorable to Airbus. Indeed, Boeing has not made significant sales in China in recent years. The last significant contract dates back to 2017. This has allowed the European manufacturer to gain ground, particularly due to tensions between Washington and Beijing, as well as trade restrictions weighing on the American company. Thus, Airbus has consolidated its position as a leading supplier in the very dynamic Chinese commercial aviation market.

Time is also an asset for Airbus. Many Chinese airlines maintain aging fleets, primarily Boeing aircraft acquired more than a decade ago. The fleets of companies like Shandong Airlines and China United Airlines include aircraft that are more than a decade old. As time passes, maintaining these aircraft becomes more expensive, their operational efficiency declines, and idle periods increase.



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At first glance, an airline might think it can offset this by combining different manufacturers. However, managing a mixed fleet involves logistical complexity and increased costs. A study by AirInsight showed that the expenses associated with managing two types of fleets (such as spare parts, training, and documentation) pay for themselves in just 12 to 15 months, offering significant savings over the fleet's lifetime.

Le recours à un fournisseur unique réduit les coûts et simplifie la gestion des opérations.

Le choix de standardiser avec un seul fournisseur comme Airbus ou Boeing simplifie les opérations, réduit les coûts, facilite la formation du personnel et optimise la gestion des pièces de rechange. En revanche, passer à un nouvel fabricant exige de réorganiser les chaînes d’approvisionnement, de former pilotes et techniciens sur de nouveaux modèles, et d’adapter les infrastructures de maintenance, allant de l’actualisation des hangars à l’acquisition d’outils spécifiques. Pour beaucoup de compagnies, cette barrière d’entrée est la raison pour laquelle elles continuent de dépendre des flottes Boeing, même si Airbus prend de l’ampleur.

La Chine s’intéresse également à développer sa propre alternative. Les trois grandes compagnies aériennes d’État – Air China , China Eastern , et China Southern – ont déjà engagé l’achat de plus de 100 unités du Comac C919 , un avion de passagers développé par l’industrie aéronautique chinoise. Bien que le soutien politique soit manifeste, les limites de cette initiative le sont aussi : la production actuelle est faible , la certification internationale est encore à ses débuts et le réseau de support technique n’atteint pas la maturité d’Airbus ou Boeing. En somme, le C919 représente une promesse d’avenir, mais pas une solution immédiate pour satisfaire la forte demande du marché intérieur.

Malgré tout, Boeing ne reste pas totalement en dehors des enjeux. Par exemple, plusieurs modèles de 737 MAX préparés pour des compagnies aériennes chinoises sont retournés aux États-Unis en avril 2025, à la suite d’une suspension des livraisons ordonnée par Pékin , comme réponse à de nouveaux tarifs sur les produits américains. Bien que cette action soit destinée à protéger l’industrie nationale, Boeing pourrait encore regagner du terrain si les tensions commerciales se réduisent et que l’accès au marché chinois est rétabli. Cependant, dans l’immédiat, Airbus se positionne comme le leader du secteur.

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Airbus est bien conscient du potentiel du marché chinois. D’après ses propres prévisions, le pays aura besoin de plus de 9 500 nouveaux avions commerciaux au cours des 20 prochaines années. Boeing avance également des chiffres similaires, estimant entre 8 830 et 9 740 unités nécessaires, selon les scénarios économiques et réglementaires. Dans tous les cas, la demande prévue est colossale. Avec les commandes à Boeing gelées et le Comac encore en phase de consolidation, Airbus a une position avantageuse. Si le nouvel accord se concrétise, il reflétera une tendance qui pourrait redéfinir l’équilibre des forces dans l’aviation commerciale pour les décennies à venir.

Impressions | [Fasyah Halim](#) | [Takashi Miyazaki](#)

Airbus's position in China is both strategic and promising. As local airlines modernize their fleets, they could overwhelmingly opt for Airbus, making competition even more intense. Industry players will therefore be closely monitoring these developments to adapt their business strategies to the changing realities of the Chinese market.

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