

Resilience

and adaptability



René Obermann
Chairman

In his first annual message since becoming Chairman in April 2020, René Obermann outlines the Board of Directors' key priorities and activities during the year. He also discusses the 2021 Annual General Meeting.

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Dear shareholders, Dear stakeholders, 2020 was a testing year dominated by COVID-19. The pandemic reached nearly every nation on Earth, exacerbated divides in society and hit already vulnerable people the hardest. It also raised huge challenges for business and political leaders and particularly those people working on the front line, such as in hospitals, schools and factories.

For the whole aviation sector it was an extremely challenging year, as it was for Airbus and its highly committed and qualified people. In a matter of weeks we were confronted with potentially serious implications on the business model and needed to adapt to this unprecedented situation. The Board was impressed by how quickly management moved to safeguard the Company.

Starting with ensuring the safety of employees, the Company then bolstered its liquidity, adjusted production rates to an appropriate level, contained spending and resized the commercial aircraft

activities. These measures were designed to ensure Airbus could sustain a prolonged downturn and still be well positioned to capture the market recovery. The actions taken were wide-ranging and proved to be the right ones to help to stem the cash outflow in the second half of the year.

Aside from COVID-19, there were other geopolitical impediments to overcome, including tariffs related to a World Trade Organization dispute and Brexit-related uncertainties. Both these topics were closely monitored by the Board and the necessary mitigation actions by management were supported.

During the crisis it became even clearer how important a close dialogue is with governments. We truly appreciate the progress made and support they gave for the industry’s whole ecosystem, from the partial unemployment schemes through to investment in research and technology.

In such a testing year, Airbus’ broad portfolio provided some protection. While the commercial aircraft activities were significantly impacted by the pandemic, Airbus Defence and Space and Airbus Helicopters provided support.

Commercial aircraft deliveries declined, although the final tally was broadly in line with the revised production plan. Airbus Helicopters’ earnings were bolstered by its governmental-related activities while Airbus Defence and Space booked some important orders, including the purchase of Eurofighter jets by Germany and new generation telecommunications satellites.

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Despite the crisis, your Company never lost sight of its ambitions and the important programmes that will be crucial to securing its future, including zero-emission technologies. Going forward, Airbus will play a leading role in the most important transformation aviation has ever seen towards a sustainable industry sector.

It is both a privilege and honour for me to serve as Chairman of the Board of Airbus and I am truly grateful for the support my predecessor and industry expert Denis Ranque gave me in assuming this role. The crisis had just begun when this transition happened and I am particularly glad to work with Board colleagues who have such high levels of experience and dedication to help the Company navigate through these challenging times. The necessity of moving mostly to virtual meetings did not hamper the Board's decision making. Unfortunately, site visits weren't possible due to the travel restrictions.

The health situation in the Netherlands meant that the 2020 AGM had to be scaled back significantly although the strong engagement of shareholders was evident in the high number of votes by proxy. Two new non-executive directors were appointed to the Board for the standard term of three years. Mark Dunkerley and Stephan Gemkow were carefully selected for their expertise in aviation and finance.

The Board Committees had a busy year. Notably, the Audit Committee supported the financial and operational measures the Company took to adapt to the pandemic. The Remuneration, Nomination and Governance Committee addressed a number of important topics including the executive remuneration structure and succession planning.

Sustainability is now deeply ingrained in the Company's purpose and is truly becoming part of its DNA. During 2020, the Ethics and Compliance Committee had its remit extended to include Sustainability and became the Ethics, Compliance and Sustainability (EC&S) Committee. There is now a dedicated Sustainability and Environment organisation within the Company and the sustainability agenda is also reinforced by influencing executives' variable remuneration. The EC&S Committee also oversaw the actions taken to comply with the terms of the agreements reached with the French, UK and US authorities at the beginning of 2020, resolving their investigations into historic compliance cases.

Given the continuation of the crisis, preserving the Company's liquidity and financial strength is key and this is why we hope for your understanding that there is no dividend proposed for 2020. We kindly ask you as shareholders for your continued support in this volatile environment. In line with the principle of staggered Board appointments, I will stand for re-election as a non-executive director at the 2021 AGM, along with my colleagues Victor Chu, Jean-Pierre Clamadieu and Amparo Moraleda.

It remains for me to thank the entire team at Airbus for their continued dedication, especially those most affected by the crisis. On behalf of the Board, I'd also like to underline our support to the management team, who performed an outstanding job in steering Airbus through this historic crisis in 2020.

René Obermann
Chairman of the Board

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Board of Directors

As of 1 January 2021



René Obermann
Chairman of the Board of Directors, Airbus SE



Guillaume Faury
Chief Executive Officer, Airbus SE



Victor Chu



Jean-Pierre Clamadieu
Chairman of Ethics, Compliance and Sustainability Committee



Ralph D. Crosby, Jr.



Lord Paul Drayson



Mark Dunkerley



Stephan Gemkow



Catherine Guillouard
Chair of Audit Committee



Amparo Moraleda
Chair of Remuneration, Nomination and Governance Committee



Claudia Nemat



Carlos Tavares

■ Audit Committee
■ Remuneration, Nomination and Governance Committee
■ Ethics, Compliance and Sustainability Committee