



100th Anniversary Of Franz Josef Strauss Birth - Airbus Group Says Thank You!

100th Anniversary Of Franz Josef Strauss Birth - Airbus Group Says Thank You!

Airbus Group is commemorating one of the founding fathers of the European aerospace industry: Franz Josef Strauss would have celebrated his 100th birthday on 6 September. As a federal minister who held several important cabinet roles and subsequent prime minister of Bavaria, Strauss recognised the huge economic and strategic importance of this sector. He was a vigorous proponent in the reconstruction of post-war Germany's aerospace industry and in promoting German industry's involvement in international projects. Today, the most significant of these programmes - Airbus - represents the epitome of European success as a global high tech industry leader.
Strauss enthusiasm for aerospace was born of a combination of personal passion and political engagement. He obtained his pilots licence for propeller aircraft in 1968, followed by a licence for jet aircraft in 1985.
When the Allies lifted the aircraft construction ban for Germany in 1955, Strauss, as the federal defence minister at that time, saw the licensed construction of military aircraft as Germany's only chance to rebuild its industry. In 1957, he established a scientific and technical advisory board that brought together leading representatives from the German aerospace industry and the German Ministry of Defence.
Additionally, Strauss was quick to recognise the potential and necessity of a European civil aircraft programme - Airbus - which German and French aircraft manufacturers began work on in the mid-1960s. As the chairman of the supervisory board of Deutsche Airbus in Hamburg and the Airbus Industrie consortium in Toulouse from 1970 until his death in 1988, he played a central role in spurring on the establishment of a European competitor to U.S. manufacturers, which dominated the industry at the time.
"In the 1970s and 80s, many saw the founding of Airbus purely as a matter of prestige, a craving for status," said Tom Enders, CEO of Airbus Group.
"The project was considered uneconomical, with little chance of success. Fortunately, though, Strauss was a true visionary with a keen analytical sense - far ahead of his time. Today, Airbus is a leading global aircraft manufacturer, and ranks first or second in many fields. In at least eight European regions, Airbus is driving employment growth. Industry-wide, the company provides major impetus to technological advancement. So it comes as no surprise that nowadays, there's not only a major street named after Strauss in Munich, Franz-Josef-Strauss-Ring, but also a Rue Franz Joseph Strauss in Toulouse. Similarly, the German Armed Forces airborne operations and air transport school in the town of Altenstadt - a training facility for paratroopers - is headquartered in the Franz Josef Strauss barracks. And of course there's no other place more worthy of bearing Strauss' name than Munich Airport".
Without the work of Franz Josef Strauss, there wouldn't be a European success story like this for us to look back on
John Leahy
Chief Operating Officer - Customers at Airbus
"With more than 15,000 aircraft sold and a market share of over 50 percent, Airbus is now on a par with the American competition. But without the work of Franz Josef Strauss, there wouldn't be a European success story like this for us to look back on," said John Leahy, Chief Operating Officer - Customers at Airbus. "I had the honour of working with him personally when I was first starting out at Airbus, which, at the time, was an extraordinary experience for me as a young salesman. I will always remember his enthusiasm for our industry along with his pioneering spirit."
Strauss was likewise a champion of the space industry. In 1965, he addressed the German parliament on the importance of space technology as part of a national scientific, research and development policy. Two years later, in 1967, Strauss as former finance minister was on hand for the cornerstone-laying ceremonies for two new German Aerospace Centre (DLR) facilities: the satellite receiving station and space operations centre in Weilheim and Oberpfaffenhofen.
On 30 September 1988, just three days before his death, Franz Josef Strauss gave a speech inaugurating a workshop for Ariane boosters in Augsburg. Noting how successful the European rocket launcher programme had already proven, he said: "The very same voices (...) that spoke out against and sought to hinder the revival of Germany's aviation industry and the related scientific work and technological advancements that would come with it - to great detriment - also questioned whether Germany should develop its own aerospace industry and technology, too. That question has finally been laid to rest." The Bavarian Prime Minister was proudly able to announce 21 Ariane 4 launches. Today's launcher, the Ariane 5, has completed 67 successful missions in a row and the development contract for its successor model, Ariane 6, has been signed, guaranteeing Europe's continued independent access to space.
Airbus Group
The Airbus Group is a global leader in aerospace and related services. In 2014, the Group generated revenues of ? 60.7 billion and employed a workforce of approximately 138,600. The Group comprises the divisions Airbus, Airbus Defence and Space and Airbus Helicopters.

Contacts for the media
Daniel Werdung
Daniel.Werdung@airbus.com
+49 89 607 34275

Pressekontakt

Airbus Deutschland GmbH

21129 Hamburg

Firmenkontakt

Airbus Deutschland GmbH

21129 Hamburg

Weitere Informationen finden sich auf unserer Homepage