Letter from François Robardet

Air transport in France, Europe and the rest of the world

N°1021, June 16, 2025

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Editorial

Dear readers,

My thoughts are with the families of the victims of the Air India plane crash.

Nearly 300 people died in what is the deadliest plane crash since 2014.

In this letter, you will find an update on the circumstances of the accident.

Happy reading!
François

The weekly newsletter

Contents :

> Florence Parly and Anne-Marie Couderc: "Air France-KLM must regain the number one position in Europe".

(source La Tribune) June 15, 2025

My comment: *The appointment of Florence Parly as Chairman of the Board of Air France-KLM, replacing Anne-Marie Couderc, will not mark a major break in the Group's governance.*

Her background, already well known to the airline industry and the company, guarantees continuity in the strategic management and supervision of the Group's major orientations, whose operational management remains in the hands of Ben Smith.

However, Florence Parly's experience as Minister of the French Armed Forces will be an invaluable asset in developing the Group's international relations, particularly with African countries.

Her network, her knowledge of the continent's geopolitical and economic issues, and her ability to forge strategic partnerships, could enable Air France-KLM to strengthen and enhance its presence on the African market, which represents a major growth area for the Group.

Read the article:

LA TRIBUNE DIMANCHE - Social crisis, Covid, recovery... Anne-Marie Couderc, how would you sum up your seven eventful years as Chairman of Air France-KLM?

ANNE-MARIE COUDERC - **I arrived in the midst of a social crisis**. We were in the midst of a fairly heavy strike, we were without a CEO after Jean-Marc Janaillac resigned, and it was difficult to find someone in such a complex period. No one wanted to step in given the situation, and as I was already Chairman of the Nominating and Governance Committee on the Board of Directors, my name was put forward. I accepted and **suggested that we immediately separate the chairmanship from general management.**

We set up this governance structure and, until we found the right person to lead the Group, I "did the job", at a time when management was in difficulty. I dealt with the social crisis. It was a very tense time, with the unions quite up in arms, but they understood the need to suspend all movements until the appointment of the future CEO.

Seven years on, how is the Air France-KLM group faring?
A-M.C. **Today, the Group is in good shape, as good as we can be given the context in which we live.** All the fundamentals are there. The transformation plans put in place by Benjamin Smith [CEO of Air France-KLM] as soon as he arrived immediately began to bear fruit. Air France, which was in a very complicated situation at the time, is now in full redevelopment mode. The company had the strengths that everyone knows about, but we still needed **to restore confidence,** restore **dialogue between managers and staff**, and give ourselves the ability to get back on track. There was also the launch of the fleet renewal and modernization plan to regain competitiveness with our competitors.

The Covid incident put an end to this recovery, but the confidence of our shareholders, and in particular the States, enabled us to pursue the strategy that had been launched. This was obviously a terrible shock, but salutary in certain respects. This period of crisis has enabled us to solidify our relations with our commercial and institutional partners, to demonstrate the strategic asset that an airline represents for France and the Netherlands, to give confidence in our fighting spirit, our resilience, our capacity for innovation, our desire to transform... And for our staff, it was a renewed sense of pride, with the desire to show that we can go beyond service quality and strive for excellence.

Florence Parly, you are returning today to a company you already knew between 2006 and 2014. Since then, you've been Minister of the Armed Forces. In what frame of mind do you arrive at the presidency of Air France-KLM?
FLORENCE PARLY - I joined the Air France-KLM Board at the end of 2023. So it's been eighteen months since I rediscovered a group that has changed and progressed enormously. And to tie in with what Anne-Marie Couderc has just said, what's most striking is the new-found pride of the staff, which you can see on their faces. For me, this is a source of wonder, because we've known other times when, even as customers, the experience was really different. As is often the case, it's in crises that we are transformed.

With regard to the governance of Air France-KLM, in your roadmap, are you going to maintain the current structure?
F.P. **This dissociation of functions between the chairmanship of the board of directors and general management** was quite innovative when Anne-Marie Couderc initiated it. It is now a general trend in large companies. We have to admit that it **has been extremely beneficial to the Group**. In addition to calmer labor relations, our corporate governance is itself calmer, with a variety of shareholders. They represent interests that are not always easy to align, but they work in the best interests of the Group. I believe this is also the result of the separation of functions between a non-executive Chairman and a Chief Executive Officer. I fully intend to draw inspiration from it and pursue it.

Now that the Group is back on track, what is your roadmap for the years ahead?

F.P. We must enable our Group to regain its place in European air transport. When Air France and KLM merged in 2004, it was the first move towards consolidation in Europe, making us the continent's leading air transport group. Others followed, like our two main competitors IAG and the Lufthansa group, and **we are no longer number one. Our aim is to regain that position**.

We must also rise to the challenge of decarbonization, with the demanding objective of reducing our CO2 emissions to comply with the Paris Agreement. This presupposes that our operational and financial performance is up to scratch, as massive investments are needed to successfully implement this decarbonization strategy. Consolidation in Europe is not yet complete. Air France-KLM must be able to play its cards fully in this reshaping of the European sky. We are already doing so, having become a shareholder in the Scandinavian airline SAS last year.

All this is taking place in a highly competitive environment. There are, of course, the low-cost airlines on the medium-haul routes, which have developed spectacularly. And then there are the long-haul airlines, from the Gulf States or the Bosphorus, with triple-digit capacity growth rates to Europe over the last twenty years, who don't play by the same rules as the European airlines. It's a deeply unbalanced game. If we want to continue to have European airlines, we have to be convinced that we won't be able to maintain our positions without being able to play on more equal terms, whether in terms of regulations or tax levels. Ultimately, Europe's place is at stake.

What are you asking of the French and European authorities in this geopolitical context?
A-M.C. Negotiations on traffic rights [agreements authorizing aircraft from one state to serve another], as between France and China for example, take place at government level. **We are lobbying to assert the rights of French and Dutch airlines, so that they can compete on a level playing field.**

F.P. **These traffic rights are often a form of compensation for the acquisition of European aircraft by non-European airlines**. The fact that our aircraft are exported all over the world is excellent news in itself, but industrial jobs have always taken precedence over service jobs. But we need to be aware of the role an airline plays in the national economy. Air France-KLM accounts for almost 2% of France's GDP, and represents 500,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs in France and the Netherlands, which cannot be relocated. This is a major economic fact that is often underestimated, if not ignored, in view of the aircraft orders that are sure to be announced, as is traditional at the Paris Air Show, which opens on Monday.

In view of Donald Trump's climate-skeptic policies, could these objectives be shattered if the United States backs out?
F.P. **The current American position of withdrawing from international agreements is creating turmoil in the air transport sector, as in many other**

areas. If the U.S. were no longer to comply with its commitments to reduce CO2 emissions from air transport, the effectiveness of these commitments would be reduced, since the emissions of U.S. airlines account for a significant proportion of the world total. Should this reduce our own ambitions? I don't think so, provided of course that a majority of signatory countries also respect their commitments...

A-M.C. The key issue will be the production and price of sustainable fuels. Unlike the United States, Europe has so far been rather cautious about investing in industrial biofuel production. As for synthetic fuels, we need to start now to be sure of significant production within a few years. The US position may have an influence on those in a position to invest, particularly oil and energy companies. Airlines are at the end of the chain, and we're not going to become fuel producers overnight. That's why we've been preaching for years about the need to invest in this type of production. We need to be part of an industrial dynamic.

Today's world is marked by geopolitical uncertainty, and this is beginning to weigh on air transport. How do you feel about this?
F.P. This geopolitical uncertainty translates not only into economic uncertainties, but also into constraints on our operations, with overflight bans multiplying in the space of a few years. To go from Europe to Asia, as we cannot fly over Russia, we take two or three hours longer than our competitors who are not subject to the same overflight bans.

A-M.C. This too is a competitive distortion for our European airlines compared with, for example, Chinese or Gulf airlines, which fly over Russia without any problem. This represents a significant economic surcharge . The same applies to Africa, since French airlines are particularly targeted and sometimes banned from flying over certain territories, let alone landing. **Geopolitics has a direct influence on our business**.

During the Covid crisis, the French state increased its stake in Air France-KLM to 28%. Is it destined to remain at this level? Will you be looking for new shareholders?
A-M.C. You have to ask him! But it's important to remember the exceptional context in which this was achieved. **The French government stood by us and put 7 billion euros on the table in the form of loans to save the company. For its part, the Dutch government contributed 3 billion euros. This was both exceptional and one-off, as we fully repaid this state aid, with interest, within two years**. For the French State, the vocation is not necessarily to remain at this level. For our part, we have to maintain our very demanding financial trajectory, which means continuing to transform and develop, while reducing our debt and meeting our environmental commitments.

F.P. Our absolute priority is to meet our operating performance targets and generate operating income that will enable us to gradually reduce our debt, continue to invest in a state-of-the-art fleet and participate in the ongoing consolidation of air transport in Europe. Today, 80% of our investments, i.e. 2 billion euros a year, are devoted to the fleet. This gives you an idea of the economic performance this implies.

We had a very good year in 2023, performance was a little less good in 2024, and we hope that 2025 will enable us to continue on this trajectory of improving operating margin, without which we cannot solve this equation.

When it comes to decarbonization, not everything rests on the shoulders of the airlines alone. We are highly dependent on the ability of aircraft manufacturers to supply us with aircraft on time, as well as on the ability of European energy companies to produce sustainable fuel, SAF, in sufficient quantities and at competitive prices. Everyone knows that SAF is now more expensive than kerosene, but it's not right that fuel produced in Europe should be three times more expensive than that produced in the United States.

When it comes to decarbonization, we're also faced with issues of competition between airlines worldwide. Today, we are meeting our obligation to incorporate 2% SAF in the fuel tanks of our aircraft, and this figure is set to rise over time. But we still need to be able to source our supplies, and we must ensure that these supplies are not sourced at extravagantly low prices compared with our competitors.

> KLM prepares for 24-hour strike, with major consequences for air traffic

(source AD) June 13, 2025

My comment: *The situation remains tense at KLM.*

During the Covid crisis, salaries were cut.

Since then, some adjustments have been made, but these have been unevenly distributed across all categories of staff.

In particular, KLM's senior executives have been restored to their former levels of remuneration, a move that has drawn sharp criticism from the Dutch political class.

In the face of disappointing results for 2024, the company launched a strategic plan called "Back on Track", aimed at improving operating income by €450 million.

The plan includes the elimination of 250 non-operational positions.

At the same time, recruitment campaigns, particularly in the maintenance departments, are struggling to bear fruit (see my letter n°1019 on this subject). The unions point the finger at salaries deemed unattractive.

Should negotiations fail, strike action is still a possibility.

However, the Dutch unions have specified that no action will be taken before the NATO summit scheduled to take place in The Hague on June 24 and 25.

The parties therefore have around ten days left to reach an agreement.

Read the article:

KLM and the unions have been arguing for months about a new collective agreement. The unions want a pay rise, but KLM wants to pause for a moment because of ongoing austerity measures. On Friday, the deadline set by the unions for KLM to meet their demands expired.

KLM wishes to continue discussions with the FNV and CNV on a new collective agreement for ground staff. "No final offer has been made and, as far as we are concerned, there are still many starting points for further discussions," says a spokesperson. "Together with the unions, including the FNV and CNV, we want to reach a new collective agreement that does justice to the commitment of our colleagues and matches the financial situation in which KLM finds itself."

Ground staff include employees who load and unload baggage, tow aircraft or greet passengers in departure lounges. According to the CNV, the collective agreement covers some 14,000 of KLM's 30,000 employees.

The unions are only willing to continue negotiations if KLM accepts their wage demands. "Our members have had enough," says John van Dorland, leader of the FNV union. "This is not a game. KLM has had enough time. If management thinks this is going to blow over, they're wrong. It's simple: without ground staff, no plane takes off."

In addition to maintaining purchasing power, the unions want a permanent scheme for people doing physically arduous work. The FNV also wants bonus agreements to be restored to their previous levels. Van Dorland: "**Management and pilots have already been amply rewarded for their flexibility. But ground staff, who keep the company running day and night, are being left out in the cold. We no longer accept this**."

> The French remain loyal to air travel

(source Voyage d'Affaires) June 12, 2025

My comment: *This survey challenges a number of preconceived ideas.*

Young people are traveling more and more, and a large proportion of French people say they would travel more if the carbon footprint of airplanes were significantly reduced.

I'm not surprised by these results.

Whether speaking to students or at international conferences, I've often been able to observe this, including - and especially - in countries where air transport is still underdeveloped.

On the other hand, I'm more cautious about the idea of a genuine democratization of air transport.

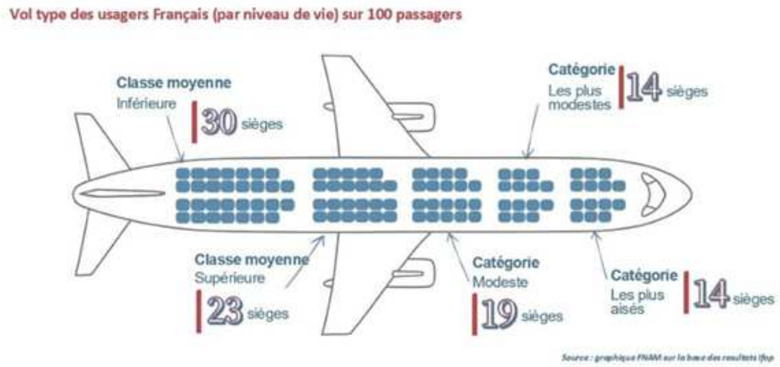
While this trend is hard to dispute in Europe or North America, it is far from being a reality in many other parts of the world.

That said, if we are to believe the projections for air traffic growth between now and 2050, these inequalities could gradually disappear.

Read the article:

Here's a survey that has certainly pleased the airline world, and **which challenges the idea that the French are increasingly hostile to air travel**. A survey carried out by the FNAM (Fédération Nationale de l'Aviation et de ses Métiers) in conjunction with the Union des Aéroports Français and with the support of Air France-KLM has analyzed the sociology of air passengers and the relationship between the French and air travel. The findings challenge many preconceived ideas.

"Air travel is often described as a means of transport for the elite. In fact, the exact opposite is true. Air travel is used by all social classes, because it is a useful, even necessary, means of transport. **In fact, 65% of French people take a neutral view of aviation, believing that flying is neither good nor bad**. Our survey also shows that the proportion of people from lower socio-professional backgrounds on planes is rising steadily. By 2024, they will account for 52% of all passengers. And almost 60% of people living in rural areas (with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants) take the plane. This justifies the importance of regional coverage," explains FNAM President Pascal de Izaguirre.



The figures bear this out. According to the French Civil Aviation Authority (DGAC), passenger numbers rose by 20 million between 2016 and 2024, representing an 11% increase to 206 million passengers in 2024. According to the FNAM and UAF survey, **65% of French people say they travel by plane, including 33% at least once a** year. In the French overseas territories, this proportion is even higher, reaching 95%.

Another misconception has been challenged: **the younger generation, more sensitive to the ecological argument, are nonetheless the biggest consumers of air travel**. The under-35s account for 46% of all passengers, even though they represent only a quarter of the French population. "Once again, this segment is driven by VFR (Visit friends and relatives) and leisure travel", says Pascal de Izaguirre.

While the proportion of passengers taking the plane to go on vacation remains stable (48% of users), **travel to visit family or friends has risen by 46%. On the other hand, the decline in the business travel segment is confirmed**. From 2016 to 2024, it lost 7 million passengers, **a decline of 15%**. Nevertheless, business travel remains the third largest source of air travel, with 41 million passengers last year.

"There has been a clear decline in round-trip travel to domestic and regional destinations where alternative transport is available", continues the FNAM Chairman. The survey also shows that air travel is preferred for trips outside France. Barely a fifth of travelers claim to use it for trips within France. **For 57% of those questioned, air travel often remains the only solution for reaching certain distances**.

Évolution des motivations, élargissement des "types" de voyageurs : la démocratisation du transport aérien rebat les cartes.

Motif de voyage	2016	2024	Variation (%)
Vacances - loisirs - achats (VLA)	86M (48%)	97M (48%)	+11M (+12%)
Visite à des amis ou à la famille (VFR)	38M (21%)	56M (27%)	+18M (+46%)
Professionnel / Congrès, Conférence	49M (25%)	41M (19%)	-7M (-15%)
Scolaire / Etudes	5M (3%)	4M (2%)	-1M (-10%)
Evènement sportif ou culturel	2M (1%)	4M (2%)	+2M (+95%)
Autre	3M (2%)	2M (1%)	-1M (-41%)
Cure - traitement - santé	1M (1%)	1,5M (1%)	+0,5M (+52%)

Source : DGAC, Analyse SIA ; tous passagers aéroports français

When it comes to air travel, **French people who fly or want to fly say they are ready to adapt their behavior to limit their impact. 73% say they would be encouraged to fly if the industry became more carbon-free**. The French seem to be relatively confident that the ecological impact of air travel will be reduced in the future: 70% believe that the sector will gradually decarbonize within the next few years, and 61% think that concrete efforts are already being made in this direction.

However, the price argument remains the strongest. 79% of those questioned said they would fly more if prices became more attractive. An argument which, in the eyes of politicians, justifies the increase in taxes, since it would discourage potential passengers.

And yet **the French remain proud of their air transport. It is still perceived as a symbol of technological progress, but also as an essential element of innovation, social cohesion and regional development**. 78% recognize that air transport is essential to the economic and tourism development of their regions. And the FNAM points out that the ever-increasing taxation of air transport runs counter to the principles of solidarity and development throughout France.

> Etihad and Ethiopian Airlines sign codeshare agreement

(source Air Journal) June 11, 2025

My comment: *Etihad Airways is trying to make a place for itself in the shadow of its neighbors Emirates and Qatar Airways, which are three times its size.*

To achieve this, the Abu Dhabi-based airline is stepping up its code-share agreements, such as those signed with Air France-KLM since 2013.

Read the article:

Etihad Airways and Ethiopian Airlines have entered into a codeshare partnership, offering additional travel options to Africa, Asia, Australia and the

Middle East.

This is the first step in the partnership established between Etihad and Ethiopian in March 2025, aimed at "offering better travel opportunities to passengers on both networks", said Etihad. "By operating our combined networks, we offer seamless travel opportunities between Africa and Asia, Australia and the Middle East," said Arik De, Etihad's chief revenue and commercial officer. "Easy connections via Abu Dhabi and Addis Ababa will improve flexibility, boost trade and tourism and offer unrivalled travel experiences for passengers on both airlines."
(...)
This codeshare partnership will enable travellers to simplify their journeys with a single booking and check-in, as well as direct delivery of their baggage to their final destination.

Thanks to this partnership, Etihad passengers will have access to Ethiopian Airlines' African network , connecting via Addis Ababa 55 destinations in 33 countries, including Entebbe, Kinshasa, Kigali, Lusaka, Harare and Victoria Falls.

At the same time, Ethiopian Airlines passengers can book connecting itineraries to flights operated by Etihad via Abu Dhabi, with additional services to 20 major destinations in Asia, Australia and the Middle East, including Sydney, Krabi, Colombo and Phnom Penh.

> For Airbus, "tensions in the supply chain have eased".

(source La Tribune) June 12, 2025

My comment: *If Airbus is easing tensions with suppliers, it's because spare parts suppliers are giving preference to aircraft manufacturers rather than airlines.*

We'll have to wait several months, or even a year, before envisaging a return to normal for the aircraft maintenance business.

Read the article:

From Monday onwards, the eyes of the world will turn to the Paris Air Show to find out whether Airbus or Boeing will win the order match. In 2023, the European manufacturer made the difference with 846 orders (versus 288 for Boeing), including an all-time aviation record of 500 A320s for the Indian airline IndiGo. Again this year, we can expect significant announcements, confirmed **Christian Scherer, head of Airbus Commercial Aircraft**. All the more so since, according to new forecasts by the world's leading aircraft manufacturer, 43,420 aircraft will be in service worldwide by the end of 2044, based on average annual traffic growth of 3.6%.

This will put further pressure on the Airbus supply chain, which saw production drop to 40 single-aisle aircraft per month during the pandemic, then pick up again with the ambition of reaching production of 75 A320s by 2027.

But with the Paris Air Show just a few days away, Christian Scherer **wants to send out a message of optimism regarding supply chain tensions**. "I'm happy to report that the general supply disruptions have eased. **They haven't disappeared completely, but the situation is improving considerably**", he says.
(...)
Florent Massou, Executive Vice President Operations, **notes clear progress on the supply chain front, with "the end of material shortages" and "a 60-70% reduction in missing parts since the beginning of the year**". In recent years, the industry has had to contend with major supply difficulties for certain metals. On the upstream side of production, Airbus has now managed to break through the 60 single-aisle aircraft per month barrier, but bottlenecks on the final assembly line are still preventing it from delivering this volume of aircraft.

On the A320 program, "the main bottleneck is still the engines", confirms Christian Scherer, even though he notes "a much more mature and professional working relationship with CFM International (joint venture between Safran Aircraft Engines and GE)".

Forty aircraft are currently awaiting engines on the final assembly lines in Toulouse and Hamburg. (...) Safran (...) had to cope with a major six-week strike in March-April at its Villaroche site (Seine-et-Marne), which created "a big hole in production", observes Florent Massou.
(...)
On the widebody side, the aircraft manufacturer is facing delivery problems on certain cabin components. "For example, **our biggest bottleneck right now on the A350 is the toilets, due to difficulties with a supplier in Mexico**", says Christian Scherer.
(...)
At the end of April, Airbus also announced an agreement to internalize the components previously entrusted to Spirit AeroSystems, acquired by its competitor Boeing, in order to ensure the long-term viability of its A350 program.

In addition to this industrial reorganization, **Airbus is continuing to open assembly lines to enable the A320 program to be ramped up to full production**. By the end of the year, production should begin on the second FAL (final assembly line) in Tianjin, China, and Mobile, USA. Then, in 2026, the Toulouse line will be duplicated, bringing the workforce at the Jean-Luc Lagardère plant to 1,300. By next year, the aircraft manufacturer will have 10 assembly lines worldwide capable of producing its best-seller: two in China, two in the USA, two in France and four in Germany.

> What could have caused the Air India plane to crash in 30 seconds?

(source BBC) June 13, 2025

My comment: *This plane crash, the most tragic since 2014, occurred shortly after takeoff.*

Unusually, several witnesses were able to record the images.

Many specialists have already spoken out in an attempt to understand the causes.

The article below reviews the main possible explanations.

As is often the case in this type of event, it is likely that the accident was the result of a combination of factors.

Some airlines have already launched targeted inspections of the engines and flaps on their Boeing 787s.

It should be noted that another Dreamliner had already suffered several failures earlier this year. This aircraft, operated by American Airlines, had to make four emergency landings in less than a month due to malfunctions in the wing flaps. (source : Le Figaro)

Read the article:

Only a thorough investigation will determine exactly what happened to flight AI171 from Ahmedabad to London Gatwick on Thursday afternoon, but the moments after take-off can be the most difficult in aviation.

Indian investigators will be joined by American and British experts in the coming days, as **authorities try to establish the causes of the crash of the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, which crashed shortly after take-off just 1.5 km from the runway at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport.**

This is the first time a 787-8 Dreamliner has suffered a fatal accident since entering commercial service in 2011. Thursday's disaster killed 241 people on board and others on the ground.

The BBC spoke to aviation experts and India-based pilots - some of whom spoke on condition of anonymity - who regularly fly 787-8s out of India's international airports, to find out what factors may have led the plane to crash into residential buildings in the heart of Ahmedabad just moments after it began its flight.

The 787-8 Dreamliner was piloted by Captain Sumeet Sabharwal and co-pilot Clive Kundar. Both were highly experienced, with over 9,000 flying hours combined - Mr. Sabharwal having acquired over 22 years' experience as an airline pilot.
(...)
India's Minister of Home Affairs, Amit Shah, said the plane was carrying 100 tonnes of fuel - virtually fully loaded - as it took off from Ahmedabad.

Almost immediately after takeoff**, the cockpit broadcast a distress call, said the Indian aviation regulator. No response was subsequently received from the aircraft**. It is not known exactly what triggered the distress call, but the flight's sole survivor told the Indian media that he heard a loud bang as the plane struggled to gain altitude.

Images authenticated by BBC Verify then show the plane flying low over what appears to be a residential area. The latest data transmitted show that the plane has reached a height of 190 meters. The plane descends and becomes obscured by trees and buildings, before a large explosion appears on the horizon.

"He wouldn't have had time to react if he'd lost both engines," said one pilot. CCTV footage seen by BBC Verify shows that the plane flew for 30 seconds.

The plane crashed in a residential area, with images showing heavily damaged apartment buildings in a densely built-up area including hospitals and official buildings.

Speculation about a "very rare" double engine failure
The videos of the plane's brief flight do not allow us to establish with any certainty the causes of the disaster.

In the coming days, a complex investigation involving the plane's black box - which records flight data - and the examination of the debris will begin. But the videos that have been released show the plane struggling to lift off the ground, apparently due to a lack of thrust or power.

Some experts have speculated that this could be an extremely rare failure of a twin-engine plane. Questions have been raised as to whether the aircraft had deployed its Ram Air Turbine (RAT), an emergency turbine that kicks in when the main engines fail to produce power for essential systems.
(...)
Engine manufacturer GE Aerospace said it was sending a team to India to help

with the investigation, while Boeing said it was giving its full support to the airline.

Another possibility raised by some experts in India is the impact of a bird.

These collisions occur when an aircraft collides with a bird, and can be extremely dangerous for aircraft. In the most serious cases, engines can lose power if they suck in a bird, as happened in the Jeju air disaster in South Korea, which killed 179 people last year.

Experts and pilots familiar with Ahmedabad airport told the BBC that it was "infamous for its birds".
(...)
However, one experienced pilot said that a bird strike is rarely catastrophic "unless it affects both engines".

Could the plane's flaps have played a role?
Three experts who spoke to BBC Verify suggested that the disaster may have occurred because the plane's flaps were not down at the time of take-off, although other pilots and analysts disputed this hypothesis.

Flaps play an essential role during takeoff, helping the aircraft to generate maximum lift at low speeds.

If they are not properly deployed, a fully loaded aircraft - carrying passengers, heavy fuel for a long-haul flight and struggling with heat - will have difficulty taking off.

In Ahmedabad, where temperatures approached 40°C on Thursday, the thinner air would have required higher flap settings and greater engine thrust, one pilot told the BBC. In such conditions, even a small configuration error can have catastrophic consequences.

CCTV footage released late Thursday afternoon shows the plane taking off from Ahmedabad, struggling to gain altitude, then slowly descending before crashing.

But a takeoff roll with flaps up would trigger warnings from the 787's takeoff configuration alert system, alerting the flight crew to an unsafe configuration, according to a pilot the BBC spoke to.

Ex-pilot Mr. Chan told BBC Verify **that the images that have been released so far are too distorted to determine with certainty whether the flaps were down**, but added that such an error would be "very unusual".

"The flaps are set by the pilots themselves, before takeoff, and there are several checklists and procedures to verify the setting," Chan said. "This would indicate potential human error if the flaps were not set correctly."

Stock market press review

> Airline sector in the red with the likelihood of an Israeli operation in Iran

(source AOF) June 12, 2025

Read the article:

Shares in US airlines United Airlines and Delta Air Lines lost 5.49% and 4.86% respectively last night. This morning, in Europe, their competitors are following the same course, with Air France-KLM, EasyJet and Ryanair all posting significant share price declines. Airline groups are affected by the strong rebound in oil prices recorded last night: +6.26% for WTI in New York, and +5.50 for Brent in London. Investors were concerned by reports from CBS News. Prices have since fallen back.

According to the American media outlet, officials in the United States have been informed that Israel is ready to launch an operation in Iran, according to several sources. Washington, anticipating reprisals against certain American sites, has advised some of its citizens to leave the region.
(...)

> Airline and travel stock values fall as Israel strikes Iran

(source Reuters) June 13, 2025

***My comment:** Airline stocks have lost almost 10% in two days.*

Read the article:

Shares in global airlines plunged on Friday, as large-scale Israeli strikes on Iran drove oil prices up by over 9% and prompted carriers to clear airspace over Israel, Iran, Iraq and Jordan.

Travel and leisure values also fell, as Iran's retaliation raised fears of supply disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial chokepoint for around a fifth of the world's oil consumption.

In the past, Iran has threatened to close the strait to traffic in retaliation for Western pressure.

"If oil is caught in the crossfire, we think President Trump will seek OPEC reserve barrels in an attempt to hold down prices and protect U.S. consumers from the economic impact of the Middle East conflict," said RBC analyst Helima Croft.
(...)
The proliferation of conflict zones around the world has weighed on airline profitability, as detours drive up fuel costs and lengthen flight times.

U.S.-based Delta, Latvia's airBaltic, Greece's Aegean Airlines, Ryan Air and Air India are among the carriers that have cancelled or diverted flights.

Air France-KLM dropped by over 5%, while Lufthansa and EasyJet lost up to 4%.
Delta Air Lines, AmericanAirlines and United Airlines were down between 4% and 5%.
(...)
Uncertainties linked to the conflict drove up crude oil prices, pushing shares in US oil majors Exxon Mobil and Chevron up by 1-3%, while oil services companies SLB and Halliburton gained 3%.

Shares in European container giant Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd rose by 4% and 1.5% respectively. Tankers such as Frontline, Torm and Euronav gained over 2%.

End of press review

> Air France-KLM share price trend

Air France-KLM shares closed at **8.240 euros** on Friday June 13. Over the week, it is **down sharply (-10.78%).** It was 13.60 euros on January 1, 2024, 8.23 euros on July 1, 2024, 7.604 euros on January 1, 2025.

The analysts' 12-month average (consensus) for AF-KLM shares is 8.88 euros (it was 17.50 euros at the beginning of January 2024). The highest price target is 12.50 euros, the lowest 7.00 euros.

I only take into account analysts' opinions after July 1, 2023.

You can find [details of the analyst consensus]on my blog.

Below is the share price trend over the last 5 years.

***My comment:** Following the Israeli strikes on Iran, Air France-KLM's share price lost 10% at the end of last week.*

> Fuel price trends this week

The price of a barrel of Jet Fuel in Europe is up (+$9) to $94. It was $94 at the end of June 2023, and $79 before the outbreak of war in Ukraine.

Brent crude oil (North Sea) is **up (+$7) to $74 a barrel.**

From mid-February 2022 to the end of July 2022, it was yo-yoing between $100 and $120. Since then, it has oscillated between $75 and $99.

***My comment:** Unlike airlines, oil prices are up 10%.*

> Corporate Mutual Funds

When you invest in one of Air France's FCPE funds, you obtain shares in these funds. You do not hold shares directly.

It is the supervisory boards, which you elected in July 2021 for a five-year term, that manage the funds and make the decisions.

The Partners for the Future, Aeroactions, Majoractions and Concorde funds only hold Air France shares.

The Horizon Épargne Actions (HEA), Horizon Épargne Mixte (HEM) and Horizon Épargne Taux (HET) funds manage portfolios of various equities.

***My comment:** If you'd like to find out more about how the various Air France FCPEs are managed, please visit the Air France-KLM Employee Share Ownership section of my website.*

Details

This information does not constitute a solicitation to buy or sell Air France-KLM shares.

You can react to this press review or send me any information or thoughts that will help me to keep you better informed.

By return, you can ask me any questions you may have about the Air France-KLM Group or employee share ownership.

See you soon.

To read my latest letters, click here

If you like this letter, please pass it on.

New readers can receive it by sending me an email address of their choice.

| François Robardet

At the forefront of more responsible European aviation, we bring people together to build the world of tomorrow.
(Air France-KLM's raison d'être)

I represented current and former Air France-KLM employees. You can find me on my twitter account @FrRobardet and on LinkedIn.