

## Airbus preparing for an independent legal assessment in response to customer disagreement over A350 surface degradation

**Toulouse, 9 December 2021** – In the face of the ongoing mischaracterisation of non-structural surface degradation on its fleet of A350 aircraft by one of its customers, it has become necessary for Airbus to seek an independent legal assessment as a way forward to resolve the dispute, which the two parties have been unable to settle during direct and open discussions.

Safety is Airbus' top priority. The surface paint-related findings have been thoroughly assessed by Airbus and confirmed by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) as having no airworthiness impact on the A350 fleet.

The attempt by this customer to misrepresent this specific topic as an airworthiness issue represents a threat to the international protocols on safety matters.

While Airbus regrets the need to follow such a path, it has become necessary to defend its position and reputation. Airbus has worked actively with its customers in order to minimise the impact and any inconvenience caused by this in-service surface degradation on the aircraft. These solutions have all been dismissed by the above-mentioned customer without legitimate justification.

The A350 is performing well in service with a 99.5% operational reliability and has proven to be a symbol of resilience in the COVID-19 crisis. It is enabling major airlines worldwide to restart international operations, reconnecting and uniting nations and continents again, as the world slowly emerges from the pandemic.

In parallel, Airbus is working to re-establish a constructive dialogue with its customer on this matter but is not willing to accept inaccurate statements of this kind to continue.

Furthermore, Airbus wishes to clarify that EASA's recent proposed corrective steps caused by areas of missing expanded copper foil (ECF) on the wings of 13 A350s as a result of a production process, which has since been adapted, is different in nature. The limited number of aircraft will be inspected as per EASA's directive.

### Contacts for the media

**Stefan Schaffrath**

Airbus  
+33 6 16 09 55 92

[Email](#)

**Matthieu Duvelleroy**

Airbus  
+33 6 29 43 15 64

[Email](#)

**Jamie Darcy**

Airbus Americas  
+1 571 214 1722

[Email](#)

**Sean Lee**

Airbus Asia-Pacific  
+65 9654 5761

[Email](#)

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