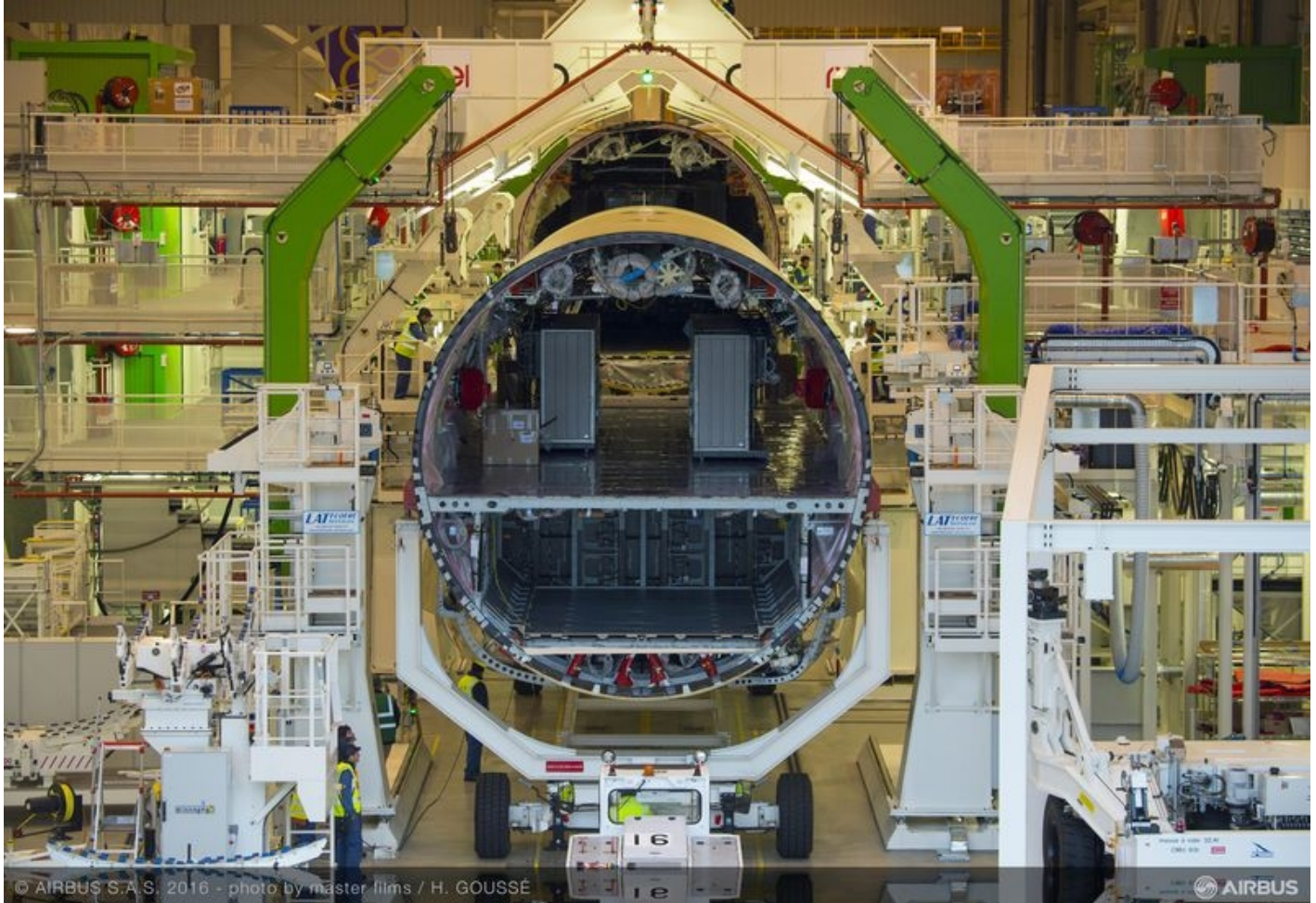


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News / Manufacturer



It's "full speed ahead" for Airbus' A350 XWB with final assembly start-up for the new-generation jetliner family's longest-fuselage member, the A350-1000 – which was kicked off this week, as per planning, in parallel with the baseline A350-900 version's continued production ramp-up to meet market demand.

The no. 1 A350-1000 is one of three test aircraft that will be utilised for this model's certification process, with the maiden flight scheduled before the end of the year.

To facilitate the concurrent A350-900 and A350-1000 production, Airbus has introduced three new "stations" in its Toulouse, France A350 XWB final assembly line – where A350-900 versions have been assembled since 2012.

The additions are a third Station 50 (where the forward, centre and aft fuselage sections are joined, along with nose landing gear installation); a fourth Station 40 (for wing-fuselage junction and tailplane installation); and a fourth Station 30 (for ground testing and cabin furnishing activities).

Underscoring the high degree of commonality between the A350-900 and A350-1000, all final assembly line stations – including the newest three – can accommodate both aircraft types.

As a further measure for accommodating concurrent A350-900 and A350-1000 production, Airbus is increasing the number of A350 XWB final assembly line employees from its current level – approximately 1,500 – to some 1,900 by 2018.

The A350-1000 can accommodate a total of 366 passengers in a typical three-class configuration, and integrates Airbus' standard comfort in economy class with 18-inch-wide seats at nine-abreast. Meanwhile, the aircraft's range of 7,950 nm. represents a significant revenue-generating advantage for operators. To date, the A350-1000 has received 181 orders from 10 customers around the globe.

Commercial service entry of the A350-1000 is targeted for mid-2017 with Qatar Airways, which also was the A350-900 version's launch customer.

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