

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001133/25
to the Commission
Anthony Smith (The Left), Marina Mesure (The Left)
(18 March 2025)**

Subject: Social crisis at Thales Alenia Space

In March 2024, management at Thales Alenia Space announced their intention to cut more than 1 300 jobs in Europe, including 1 124 in France. However, the Thales Group has made a record profit of EUR 20.6 billion, up 11.7%, and its order book is full, thanks, in particular, to public orders such as the demonstration contract for the HydRON project, signed recently, and industrial activities for the IRIS² project.

In response, workers were stirred into action to protect their jobs and rail against the deterioration in their working conditions: according to its occupational health services, more than 50% of the group's employees are overworked and 13% are already burned out.

At a time when the EU has decided to boost its autonomy in the defence and space sector, does the Commission intend to:

1. ensure that jobs and skills are maintained and improve the working conditions of employees at a company that has signed public contracts?
2. step up checks to see to it that working conditions are decent at companies that have signed public contracts?

Submitted: 18.3.2025

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(6 June 2025)**

The rules of public procurement are governed by the EU Directive on Public Procurement ⁽¹⁾. In particular, Article 18(2) of the directive (the so-called horizontal social clause) states that 'Member States shall take appropriate measures to ensure that in the performance of public contracts economic operators comply with applicable obligations in the fields of environmental, social and labour law established by Union law, national law, collective agreements or by the international environmental, social and labour law provisions listed in Annex X'.

Individual Member States should ensure that rules resulting from the EU social *acquis* are respected in the context of public procurement. While the directive does not have specific clause on training and working conditions, the Commission supports Member States to invest in skills and jobs through various funding channels such as the European Social Fund Plus or the Recovery and Resilience Fund.

The Union will further support labour and social standards to ensure that the transition is fair and equitable for all, including in the context of the Commission's forthcoming evaluation of the legislative framework on public procurement. On labour inspection, the European Labour Authority is supporting the work of national authorities.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC, OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 65. — <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2014/24/oj/eng>.