# Emirates president demands accountability as Boeing 777X delays stretch to six years



At the recent International Air Transport Association (IATA) Annual General Meeting in New Delhi, Emirates President Sir Tim Clark issued a scathing commentary on the ongoing delivery delays experienced by global aircraft manufacturers, particularly Boeing and Airbus. Clark's remarks reflect a growing frustration within the airline industry over supply chain issues that have become a persistent problem, severely impacting the ability of airlines to modernise their fleets and meet increasing passenger demand.

Clark did not mince words when addressing the aircraft manufacturers, stating, “I am pretty tired of seeing the hand-wringing about the supply chain: you (manufacturers) are the supply chain.” This call for accountability highlights a significant tension between airlines and the manufacturers, who have relied on the pandemic as a convenient excuse for production delays. With airlines like Emirates seeking to introduce more fuel-efficient, long-range aircraft, these setbacks are not just logistical inconveniences; they pose real threats to operational integrity and competitive positioning in a rapidly evolving market.

A substantial contributor to these frustrations is the Boeing 777X, an aircraft on which Emirates has placed an order for 205 units. Originally slated for delivery in 2020, the timeline has now been pushed back, with the first deliveries anticipated between late 2026 and early 2027, representing a staggering six-year delay. As the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) continues to tighten scrutiny over certification processes following safety concerns, the question of when Boeing can resolve these issues remains uncertain. Clark noted, however, that recent engagements with Boeing have revealed a "greater degree of determination" to rectify these problems, albeit cautiously optimistic about their efforts.

Boeing’s troubles are reflected not only in the delays of the 777X but also in its broader production issues stemming from quality-control crises and workforce disruptions, including strikes that have hampered output. Airbus, its chief competitor, is likewise grappling with significant delivery delays, warning that its A320neo and A350 programmes could see timelines extend by up to three years. These struggles paint a grim picture for the entire aerospace sector, which is still recovering from the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Emirates' operational strategies have been directly affected by these delays. In response to the aircraft shortages, the airline has embarked on a $5 billion initiative to refit 220 of its existing aircraft to sustain its network and enhance service. While organizations like the International Civil Aviation Organization and the IATA advocate for greener aviation solutions, Clark has pointed out the repercussions of these delays, which may force Emirates to extend the operational lifespan of older, less efficient aircraft to meet market demands.

Moreover, engine supply issues are compounding the situation. The dual American and British manufacturers, GE and Rolls-Royce, have come under scrutiny for their reliability, particularly in the challenging climates faced by airlines like Emirates. Clark remarked on the necessity for both manufacturers to enhance their performance or risk losing opportunities in a profitable market segment. This concern is significant for Rolls-Royce, which has had its Trent 1000 and Trent XWB engines facing multiple airworthiness directives from the U.K. Civil Aviation Authority, necessitating additional scrutiny and performance assessments.

The larger context reveals a supply chain crisis that is fundamentally intertwined with geopolitical factors, lingering effects of the pandemic, and rising operational costs. Both the U.S. Department of Transportation and FAA have identified considerable labor shortages and insufficient digitalisation as hurdles that must be overcome to stabilise production. Additionally, the White House Supply Chain Resilience report has categorised aerospace as a sector in dire need of strategic investment and reform to bolster its capacity against future shocks.

Clark's assertive commentary represents a broader sentiment among airline executives who are demanding more robust accountability from aircraft manufacturers. “You are the supply chain,” he reiterated, urging for a model where manufacturers take ownership of the timelines that impact not only their business but also the operational health of airlines globally. As the aviation industry continues to navigate these turbulent waters, the persistently high demand for air travel only underscores the urgency for rapid resolution and reliable partnerships, as the world emerges from pandemic-induced restrictions.

With global passenger traffic expected to rebound beyond pre-pandemic levels, the challenge remains whether major aircraft manufacturers can indeed rise to the occasion and deliver on their commitments. Tim Clark's assertiveness signals a pivotal moment for accountability and expectations, with Emirates poised to continue demanding excellence in its supplier relationships. Whether the likes of Boeing, Airbus, Rolls-Royce, and GE can meet the evolving needs of carriers like Emirates—and restore their reputations—will be critical in shaping the future of global aviation.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/emirates-tim-clark-demands-accountability-from-aircraft-manufacturers-amid-boeing-777x-delays-and-global-supply-chain-woes-what-new-updates-you-need-to-know/), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/emirates-boss-slams-planemaker-hand-wringing-over-supplies-2025-06-01/)
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* Paragraph 5 – [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/ryanair-cut-traffic-estimate-next-year-due-plane-delivery-delays-2024-10-16/)
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1. <https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/emirates-tim-clark-demands-accountability-from-aircraft-manufacturers-amid-boeing-777x-delays-and-global-supply-chain-woes-what-new-updates-you-need-to-know/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/emirates-boss-slams-planemaker-hand-wringing-over-supplies-2025-06-01/> - Emirates President Tim Clark expressed cautious optimism regarding Boeing's recovery from recent production and certification delays, citing visible progress under its new CEO. Boeing is striving to stabilize operations after a quality control crisis and labor strike halted aircraft production last year. The company is awaiting U.S. FAA certification for its delayed 777X aircraft, with Emirates expecting the first deliveries between late 2026 and early 2027—six years behind schedule. Clark noted improved communication and determination from Boeing but criticized ongoing aerospace supply issues, urging manufacturers to take more responsibility. He also dismissed the pandemic as a continuing excuse for delays. Additionally, Clark addressed the broader industry's challenges, pointing to Airbus's three-year delivery backlog and emphasizing inefficiencies in consolidated aerospace firms. On tariffs, he indicated Emirates hasn't seen significant demand change and suggested GE Aerospace would bear most of the tariff costs. Clark also touched upon Rolls-Royce, acknowledging persistent engine maintenance issues but left open the possibility of future deals if performance improves, especially regarding Airbus A350-1000 jets.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/emirates-airline-spend-5-bln-dollars-refitting-aircraft-president-says-2025-03-05/> - Emirates airline is set to invest around $5 billion to refit 220 of its aircraft to maintain and grow its network amidst delays in delivery of new jets. President Tim Clark emphasized the necessity of this move to sustain the carrier's operations. The refit initiative is in response to production delays facing the aviation industry, notably for newer aircraft from manufacturers like Boeing, with whom Clark has been critical following a door blowout incident on an Alaska Airlines flight. Emirates aims to lead in product development and is expediting the turnaround process despite uncertain delivery schedules, particularly concerning the Boeing 777X expected in October 2025. Emirates joins other airlines like Air India in upgrading their fleets to enhance customer experience and service routes.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/68243dae-977d-439a-bdc8-625a7c3a5ba1> - Ryanair has announced it will fly fewer passengers next summer due to Boeing's delays in delivering 737 aircraft. The airline had planned to receive 30 planes between March and June 2025 to support its growth targets, but now expects significantly fewer deliveries, potentially affecting its expansion plans through 2025. The delays are caused by a strike at Boeing’s main factories and ongoing production issues. This situation is exacerbating a global shortage of new aircraft, leading many airlines to either extend the use of older planes or adjust their growth strategies. Airline executives, including those from Lufthansa and Emirates, expressed frustration with Boeing’s delays and called for improved communication regarding the impact and timelines. Despite these challenges, Ryanair’s CEO, Michael O'Leary, remains optimistic about Boeing’s long-term ability to meet demands.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/emirates-orders-more-boeing-777f-freighters-sources-say-2024-10-16/> - Emirates, one of the largest cargo carriers globally, is expanding its fleet of Boeing 777F freighters to accommodate a significant increase in cargo trade. Despite existing tensions with Boeing over delays, Emirates added to the 11 unidentified-orders Boeing reported in September, likely including a fresh 777F order from Emirates. Currently, Emirates operates around a dozen 777F cargo jets and has four more on order, alongside leasing four 747s to meet demand. The airline plans to announce further investments in freighters, possibly including Airbus A350 freighters and future 777X models, aiming to triple its cargo fleet by 2030. Delays in passenger planes and a booming demand for dedicated freighter planes are interlinked, with the global cargo yield increasing significantly.
6. <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/ryanair-cut-traffic-estimate-next-year-due-plane-delivery-delays-2024-10-16/> - Ryanair's CEO Michael O'Leary announced that the airline would lower its passenger traffic estimates for the next year due to expected delays in Boeing aircraft deliveries, which have been exacerbated by ongoing strikes. Initially scheduled to receive 20 aircraft by the end of December, Ryanair now anticipates these deliveries in January and February. However, significant concerns remain for the 30 aircraft expected between March and June. O'Leary acknowledged that these delays would result in reduced traffic growth for Ryanair in the upcoming year. This situation highlights broader capacity constraints in the aviation industry, with both Boeing and Airbus struggling to meet delivery targets. Ryanair aims to avoid the overstaffing and associated costs experienced this year due to similar challenges. Additionally, O'Leary mentioned ongoing discussions with Boeing executives to address certification and delivery issues.
7. <https://www.agbi.com/aviation/2024/10/boeing-777x-delay-highly-expensive-for-us-says-emirates/> - Boeing 777X aircraft under construction at the company’s production facility in Everett, Washington: workers have been on strike at the plant for a month. Plane already four years late. Carrier has 205 on order. Forced to refit older aircraft. Planemaker Boeing’s announcement of more delays in the delivery of its 777X aircraft to customers has had a “significant and highly expensive” impact on Emirates’ fleet programme, the Dubai carrier said this week. Emirates has already spent an extra $3 billion for a massive cabin refurbishment programme on 191 of its existing planes, 110 A380 aircraft and 81 Boeing 777s, as it awaits the first of its order for 205 777X jets. The 777X was due to be delivered four years ago. Boeing’s CEO, Kelly Ortberg said: “On the 777X programme, the challenges we have faced in development, as well as from the flight test pause and ongoing work stoppage, will delay our programme timeline.” Ortberg said that Boeing, which is already facing a month-long strike by workers looking for better pay, will reduce the size of its total workforce by around 10 percent, or around 17,000 people, “to align with our financial reality”. Emirates president Tim Clark told AGBI: “With no clear timeline for the restart, coupled with ongoing strikes, I fail to see how Boeing can make any meaningful forecasts of delivery dates.