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The Associated Press

PARIS - European aerospace company EADS says strong deliveries by airplane maker Airbus helped drive higher earnings in the first quarter.

The Airbus parent company reaffirmed its forecast of lifting commercial aircraft deliveries this year to between 600 and 610, as demand from Middle Eastern and Asian carriers to expand their fleets continues to drive sales for one of Europe's largest exporters.

EADS reported net profits for the January-March quarter of 241 million euros (\$314 million), nearly double the 126 million euros it made a year earlier.

In a statement Tuesday EADS CEO Tom Enders said the company "had a rather good start into 2013" and remained focused on improving profitability further this "in 2013 and beyond."

Airbus delivered 144 aircraft in the first quarter, up from 131 in the same period last year.

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