

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004741/25
to the Commission
Loucas Fourlas (PPE)
(1 December 2025)**

Subject: Tackling forest fires and strengthening aerial firefighting in the EU

Climate change has dramatically increased the frequency and magnitude of forest fires all across Europe. The last few years have demonstrated a need for better coordinated European action, especially by means of modern firefighting aircraft. A number of Member States, particularly those in the south, are unable to respond to these growing needs alone.

Are there plans to create a permanent European forest firefighting mechanism with its own resources?

Submitted: 1.12.2025

**Answer given by Ms Lahbib on behalf of the European Commission
(18 March 2026)**

While Member States are primary responsible for civil protection and for providing disaster-management systems, the Commission has a supporting competence.

Given the concern of wildfires and to better support Member States, the EU took steps to improve preparedness and bolster capacities through the European strategic reserve ‘rescEU’ ⁽¹⁾ under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) ⁽²⁾.

For the long term, the Commission invested significant financial resources for the acquisition of twelve medium amphibious planes and five helicopters under rescEU permanent fleet.

The planes will be hosted by six Member States and are expected to arrive gradually as of 2028. Helicopters will be hosted by three Member States, with the first to be operational in the first half of 2026.

Meanwhile, the UCPM set up a transitional fleet of firefighting aircraft under rescEU during the summer seasons. Since 2023, its capacities have doubled.

In 2025, this fleet had 26 assets, available for deployment if there was a request for assistance under the UCPM. This complements the capacities in the European Civil Protection Pool ⁽³⁾, as well as teams pre-positioned in 2025 in five Member States ⁽⁴⁾ for a total of almost 670 firefighters.

The support provided included a wildfire support team during the summer, using satellite maps through the EU's Copernicus Emergency Management Service.

The Commission, together with Member States' experts, is following developments related to new EU projects that could provide value to enhance EU response.

The creation of a new European firefighting hub, designed to coordinate rapid response across the EU and support neighbouring countries in the Eastern Mediterranean, was announced by the Commission President in the State of the Union 2025 ⁽⁵⁾ speech and subsequently by the Commission in its Pact for the Mediterranean ⁽⁶⁾.

To highlight the need to strengthen the disaster risk management cycle — prevention, preparedness, response and recovery — for reducing the risk, the Commission will in due course publish a communication on integrated wildfire risk management.

⁽¹⁾ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/resceu_en.

⁽²⁾ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en.

⁽³⁾ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/european-civil-protection-pool_en.

⁽⁴⁾ Greece, Italy, France, Portugal and Spain.

⁽⁵⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/state-union/state-union-2025_en.

⁽⁶⁾ https://north-africa-middle-east-gulf.ec.europa.eu/what-we-do/pact-mediterranean_en.