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Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas
on behalf of the European Commission
(12.10.2026)

With regard to aircraft covered by Article 2(3) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1139¹, including firefighting aircraft, the Regulation fully preserves the prerogative of Member States to decide whether to make use of the mechanism provided for in Article 2(6). In this respect, the Commission's role is limited to drawing attention to the potential advantages that such a choice may offer.

At the same time, Europe's immediate aerial firefighting needs call for a solution that can be deployed in the near term and is based on an aircraft type that is available within a short timeframe and with an established operational track record. The Commission has allocated significant financial resources for the acquisition of 12 new firefighting airplanes, hosted by several Member States, which will form the permanent rescEU fleet.

European alternatives are currently under development and monitored by the Commission. These projects, if successful, could help strengthen Europe's strategic and industrial autonomy. However, they might face the challenges inherent in designing and certifying an entirely new aircraft, with first deliveries expected only in several years' time.

¹ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/1139/oj>.