

EN

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Answer given by Ms Lahbib

on behalf of the European Commission

(1.10.2026)

The Commission disagrees with the alleged lack of planning as it started developing the permanent rescEU¹ fleet in 2019, financing since then the acquisition of 12 firefighting airplanes and five helicopters. Following the relevant technical discussions with national experts, the Commission has awarded grants to Member States allowing these acquisitions, based on the agreed specific technical requirements, which remain under their responsibility and supported Member States in the negotiations with the selected aircraft manufacturer that were finalised in 2024. Procurement and negotiations followed the usual timelines in this type of industry.

The Commission continues to work with Member States and with the industry to identify and closely monitor the development of possible new European projects that could boost EU preparedness for forest fires in the future, aiming to strengthen wildfire risk management in the EU in an integrated manner as outlined in its latest Communication², with focus on prevention, preparedness and recovery, in addition to supporting response.

Every year, the Commission identifies lessons from the wildfire seasons to further improve the system. Therefore, the Commission will continue to strengthen cooperation among Member States through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism³. In this context, the amount and scope of future rescEU capacities will depend on the outcomes of the negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2028–2034) and on the Commission proposal for a Regulation on the Union Civil Protection Mechanism⁴.

The deployment of the Italian aircraft to Tunisia was carried out following the request for assistance from Tunisia at a moment when there was no request for this type of capacity from Member States.

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

² https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/civil_protection/communication_on_integrated_wildfire_risk_management.pdf.

³ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en.

⁴ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:a65e66da-630b-11f0-bf4e-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF.