

# Aides d'État: la Commission autorise l'aide franco-allemande de 377 millions d'euros en vue du développement de l'hélicoptère nouvelle génération X6 d'Airbus

The Council agreed its stance on part of a package of proposals aimed at reducing risk in the banking industry. The Council closed excessive deficit procedures for Croatia and Portugal, confirming their deficits have dropped below the EU's 3% of GDP reference value.

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## State Aid: Commission approves €377 million of French and German aid to develop innovative Airbus X6 helicopter

Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"The French and German support will stimulate considerable private investment in this project. The support will help bring a new generation of innovative heavy helicopters to the market, without causing undue distortions of competition."*

Both France and Germany will provide public support for the development of Airbus' X6 helicopter project. The support will amount to a total of €377 million in repayable advances granted over a period of eight years (€330 million by France and €47.25 million by Germany).

For the X6 helicopter project, Airbus will undertake significant research, development and innovation to develop an innovative and high-technology civil heavy duty helicopter. In particular, the twin-engine X6 helicopter will have a higher range of action, coupled with improved fuel efficiency, as compared to the current generation of helicopters. It aims to simplify access to platforms in the high seas, and also facilitate search and rescue, as well as humanitarian missions. The project is fully in line with the objectives set by [the Europe 2020 flagship initiative for an Innovation Union](#).

The scope of the X6 helicopter project is such that the associated risks are high and the investments required exceed the self-financing capability of

Airbus. The financial markets are also reluctant to finance such an ambitious research and development project for which a return on investment is only expected over a long period.

The Commission assessed the measures under Article 107(3)(c) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which allows state aid to facilitate the development of certain economic activities, where such aid does not adversely affect trading conditions to an extent that is contrary to the common interest.

The Commission found that:

- support for this project is likely to continue to stimulate further investment in a market that is expected to grow in the next decade, and where competitors continue to invest in order to bring new products to the market.
- the significant exposure of the X6 helicopter project to systemic and atypical risks, due to its high ambition in terms of breakthrough research and innovation, as well as the magnitude of the initial investment necessary to start the project, make self-financing in the absence of public support very unlikely.

On this basis, the Commission concluded that the French and German measures are in line with EU state aid rules, as they will significantly contribute to research and innovation in the EU without unduly distorting competition in the Single Market.

## **Background**

The European Commission adopted in [May 2014](#) state aid rules to facilitate the granting of aid measures by Member States in support of research, development and innovation (R&D&I) activities.

As a result of state aid in this field, companies allocate higher budgets to R&D&I and carry out a more ambitious range of research activities. At the same time, the public money invested in line with the rules supplements and does not replace (“crowd out”) private investment in R&D&I. By increasing (rather than replacing) private investment, new and otherwise unrealised innovative projects can be carried out in Europe. Thus, state aid rules relating to investment in R&D&I help to build and maintain the foundations of a competitive European economy.

The non-confidential version of this decision will be made available under the cases numbers SA.45183 and SA.45185 in the [State Aid Register](#) on the [DG Competition](#) website, once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. The electronic newsletter [“State aid Weekly e-News”](#) lists the most recent state aid decisions published in the Official Journal and on the website.

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## Staatliche Beihilfen: Kommission gibt grünes Licht für deutsch-französische Beihilfen von 377 Mio. EUR für Entwicklung des innovativen Hubschraubers Airbus X6

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## EU channels extra support for Portugal to help with forest fires

This morning President **Juncker** and Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** immediately offered the EU's full readiness and capacity to do all possible to help and expressed their condolences to all those affected.

The European Commission is in constant contact and coordination with the Portuguese authorities. Earlier this morning Commissioner Stylianides called Portugal's Minister of Interior de Sousa to express the Commission's solidarity to the people of Portugal and its authorities.

In addition to immediate EU support mobilised already this morning, further assistance is now on its way.

"Portugal is not alone in these difficult times. Europe is about solidarity and we have acted quickly to send concrete support since the early hours. Following France's three firefighting planes dispatched this morning, let me now thank Italy and Spain who have also offered four additional planes through the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism.

This vital support will help the heroic Portuguese firefighters who are risking their lives to bring the fires under control. I encourage participating states to now also offer firefighters to Portugal, following their latest request for assistance. The EU continues to be ready to provide additional emergency support Portugal requires," said Commissioner **Stylianides**.

Portugal activated the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism today, requesting firefighting aircraft. It has now requested firefighters.

The European Commission, through its 24/7 Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), has been in constant contact with EU Member States to channel support through the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism.

A liaison officer from the ERCC has arrived in the country to help coordinate offers of assistance.

### **Background**

The planes channelled through the Civil Protection Mechanism will operate in the affected areas such as Vila Real, Coimbra and Leiria.

Through the mechanism France has offered three planes, Spain two and Italy two. Spain also offered four on a bilateral basis.

The European Commission coordinates voluntary offers made by participating states through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, and can co-finance the transport of relief items and experts to the country in question.

The mobilisation of assistance is coordinated through the Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), which closely monitors developments and offers the possibility of transport co-financing for the offered assistance.

The assistance can consist of items for immediate relief as well as experts and supporting intervention teams. In the case of fires, this can include fire-extinguishing aircraft. The Commission cannot send planes or equipment itself via the Mechanism.

Overall, the Mechanism facilitates the cooperation in disaster response among 34 European states (28 EU Member States, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Norway, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey).

[EU Civil Protection Mechanism Factsheet](#)

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## **Statement by Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides on the deadly forest fires in Portugal**

All our thoughts are with the families and friends of those affected by the deadly forest fires that have struck several parts of Portugal.

We express our condolences to those that have lost loved ones.

The EU is fully ready to help. All will be done to assist the authorities and people of Portugal at this time of need.

In an immediate response to a request for assistance by the Portuguese authorities, the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated to provide firefighting aircraft.

Immediately, France has offered three planes through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and they will be quickly sent to assist the local emergency efforts. In addition, Spain has also sent aircraft on a bilateral basis.

We commend the bravery of the firefighters and emergency services on the scene risking their own lives to save others.

The European Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), which monitors natural disasters 24/7, is in constant contact with the national civil protection authorities.

The EU's emergency centre has sent a liaison officer to Portugal and will coordinate the delivery of support and any further requests.