



## Purchase of 50 “Canadair” aircraft: MEPs demand clarification ahead of the EU-Canada summit

Strasbourg, 8 October 2026

**At the initiative of the European Parliament’s “Resilience, Disaster Management and Civil Protection” Intergroup and its co-chairs, 33 MEPs sent a letter on 7 October to Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, António Costa, President of the European Council, and Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament.**

They are responding to a draft joint statement prepared in Coreper II (Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Member States). According to this text, the European Union and Canada would announce, at their summit on 29 and 30 October, the purchase of 50 De Havilland water bombers (DHC-515, successor to the “Canadair”) by 2030. The draft says nothing about funding, the allocation of the aircraft or the industrial benefits for Europe.

The signatories are calling for clarification ahead of the summit.

### **A project that raises more questions than it answers**

Fifty aircraft is more than double the number ordered since 2024 for the European rescEU fleet. Who pays for what, and from which budget? How many aircraft for Europe, and how many for Canada? How can 50 be delivered by 2030, when De Havilland has yet to deliver a single DHC-515? And what is the return for European industry?

*“The future of Europe’s fleet for the next ten years cannot be decided in passing, in a joint statement. A decision of this magnitude demands seriousness, transparency and a genuine debate,” said Grégory Allione (Renew), co-chair of the Intergroup.*

### **Partnership must not mean dependence**

The signatories fully support the partnership with Canada, a trusted ally. But cooperation does not mean outsourcing the production of the capabilities that protect our citizens. Wildfire seasons are intense on both sides of the Atlantic: sharing aircraft with a partner that has pressing needs of its own is operationally very difficult. Each side must have its own resources.

*“Our firefighters need high-quality equipment. It would be desirable for them to be able to rely on European offers that meet these requirements. When nearly €2.5 billion of public money is at stake, it is also an opportunity to support jobs, develop skills and strengthen industrial capacity in Europe,” said Pascal Arimont (EPP), co-chair of the intergroup.*



## Europe has its own solutions – it just needs to order them

The “only option available” argument no longer holds. Several industrial projects backed by Member States already exist. Hynaero’s Frégate-F100, an amphibious water bomber comparable to the “Canadair”, is being industrialised in France with Italian and Spanish partners. Keppclair Evolution, which allows existing aircraft to be rapidly converted into water bombers, has been in flight testing since September. Positive Aviation is converting ATR 72s into amphibious firefighting aircraft, and Airbus’s A400M firefighting kit was used for the first time this summer, in Gironde. The latest aircraft ordered by France in June will not be delivered before 2032-2033 – precisely the timeframe for these first European aircraft.

By capturing almost all of Europe’s public demand for the decade, 50 Canadian aircraft would deprive our manufacturers of exactly what they lack: orders to finance certification, production ramp-up and the assembly line.

*“Funding thousands of jobs across the Atlantic while our own industries are still waiting for their first orders makes no industrial or strategic sense,” stressed Grégory Allione.*

## Three requests ahead of the summit

The signatories call on the Commission:

1. to clarify the funding, volume and destination of the aircraft under consideration;
2. to make no commitment that would lock in the needs of the rescEU fleet beyond the transitional capacities strictly necessary;
3. to reserve a share of European public procurement for programmes designed and assembled in Europe, in particular in the revision of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

## From words to action

On 16 September, in her State of the Union address, Ursula von der Leyen welcomed the launch of new joint projects and spending that is “more European than ever”.

All the signatories now expect these words to be followed by concrete action. Strategic autonomy cannot stop at the door of civil protection.

**The Intergroup will follow developments closely and will continue to press for a European preference for our civil protection tools.**