

[Daily News 07 / 08 / 2017](#)

EU mobilises planes to fight forest fires in Italy

The European Commission has helped mobilise 3 aircraft (2 Canadair and a reconnaissance plane) through the [EU's Civil Protection Mechanism's](#) voluntary pool of assets, following a request for assistance from Italy to battle forest fires in the country. In addition, the EU's emergency [Copernicus Satellite mapping system](#) is also helping the Italian civil protection authorities. *"The EU has provided immediate assistance to Italy, following a request for help. 3 planes from France will operate in Italy today. This support is through the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism and shows the value of having a European response to natural disasters. The planes will work alongside the Italian civil protection putting EU solidarity into action,"* said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides. This is the second time this summer that Italy has activated the EU Civil Protection Mechanism for forest fires. The Commission's 24/7 [Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#) is closely monitoring the situation in Italy and the forest fire risk across Europe. [Photos](#) and [video](#) stockshots of the Emergency Centre are available, as well as a [MEMO](#) 'Fighting forest fires in Europe – how it works'. (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

State aid: Commission approves aid scheme of up to €10 million for new air routes to the region of Limburg in the Netherlands

The European Commission has found that a Dutch scheme to grant start-up aid to airlines launching new routes to and from the airport of Maastricht/Aachen is in line with EU State aid rules. The Commission has concluded that the project will improve the connectivity of the region with other regions across Europe, in line with EU objectives, without distorting competition in the Single Market. The scheme will last until 31 December 2019, with a total budget of up to €10 million. There will be no overlap between any of the routes operated as part of the scheme and routes operated by other airports in the same catchment area. In particular, the Commission found that the scheme is in line with EU State aid rules, in particular the Commission's [Aviation Guidelines](#). These rules enable Member States to grant start-up aid to airlines, subject to certain criteria, to give them the necessary incentive to create new routes from regional airports. This increases the mobility of EU citizens by establishing access points for intra-EU flights and stimulates regional development. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number SA. 47746. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: + 32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

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