

Green light for the new helicopter by “Leonardo”

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Daniele Marantelli, the Democratic Party MP, did not hide his great satisfaction. The **defence committee** has given a favourable opinion to the initial phase of analysis, design and qualification, to the construction of three pre-series helicopters, of the new search and escort helicopter, which, in 2020, will replace the AW-129 (better known as Mongoose), produced in Varese Province.

“I was the one who presented the project to the Committee,” Marantelli explained, “and this is a demonstration that the government trusts our companies, and that Renzi didn’t come to the **AgustaWestland** factories just for pleasure. The figures don’t lie: **€545 million has been allocated for the trainer produced in Venegono** and another €487 million will come in for the new helicopter from Vergiate. Now, all that is left is for the matter to pass to the Senate Committee, and then the Government’s decree.”

The program is expected to last ten years – In the aerospace sector, proprietary platforms require large investments, in the order of billions of euros, paid out over the long term. The payments for the entire **program** (analysis, acquisition and implementation of the three pre-series helicopters) **will begin already in 2016 with €5.56 million** and continue progressively, with **€15.2 million** in 2017, **€46 million** in 2018, **€40 million** in 2019, **€40 million** in 2020, **€50.3 million** in 2021, **€70 million** in 2022, **€70 million** in 2023, **€70 million** in 2024, and **€80 million** in 2025, totalling **€487.06 million**. Over three million hours of work have been planned, and almost every company in the supply chain (**source, acts of the government, the Chamber of Deputies**) will be involved.

“The program will be carried out exclusively by Italian aerospace companies,” Marantelli continued, “many of which are local, the true highlight of this province’s production system, made up of many excellent small and medium-sized companies. There will be a significant industrial return, which will involve **research centres and universities in the creation of new proprietary platforms, which, in turn, will allow us to participate in major international tenders, with the support of the Government.**”

Industry is the future of our young people – “In the last few years, we’ve focused a lot on the potential of tourism and agriculture, which, of course, are important for a country like Italy,” the Democratic Party MP concluded. “But, looking at the numbers, it’s still industry that provides the greatest prospects for young people. In 2015, only **AgustaWestland** exported **72% of its production**, and if we extend our gaze to the entire manufacturing sector, Italy is second only to Germany.”

di Translated by Federica Bettoni (Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook)