

Italy's Alenia keen for involvement in Franco-British UCAV programme

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Alenia [Aermacchi](#) is keen to become involved in the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) demonstrator programme being jointly developed by the UK and France via their aerospace champions BAE Systems and [Dassault Aviation](#).

Giuseppe Giordo, chief executive of Alenia Aermacchi, believes the Franco-British alliance created by the Lancaster House treaty of November 2010 "is not a closed one" and the nations would be willing to "consider other partners to enter it".

However, Giordo cautions that Alenia would only be willing to join if it was given an equal billing with the two other manufacturers. "Clearly we will not enter with a secondary role. If the French and British can understand that another party can enter at the same level [as BAE Systems and [Dassault](#)] this will be a sound approach."

He says the Italian authorities are talking to their British and French counterparts, as well as other governments across Europe, to identify "which is the best alliance" for its involvement.

Giordo was speaking at an event to mark the second flight of the [Dassault Neuron](#) on 19 December in Istres in the south of France. Produced by six European nations and their aerospace representatives, including Alenia, the Neuron is a stealthy unmanned combat air vehicle (UCAV), designed as a technology demonstrator.

The possibility has also been raised that BAE Systems could become involved in the Neuron, bringing with it technology developed for its Taranis UCAV demonstrator programme.

However, Charles Edelstenne, chief executive of Dassault, plays down this possibility. He says: "The Neuron programme has a certain number of partners and we have to go to the end of it. It is out of the question to bring in another partner."

BAE and Dassault, he says, will draw on their experiences from Neuron and Taranis to "inform" the design of FCAS.

Nonetheless, he remains open to the potential of other countries becoming involved. "Others will join or not join in the future," he says.