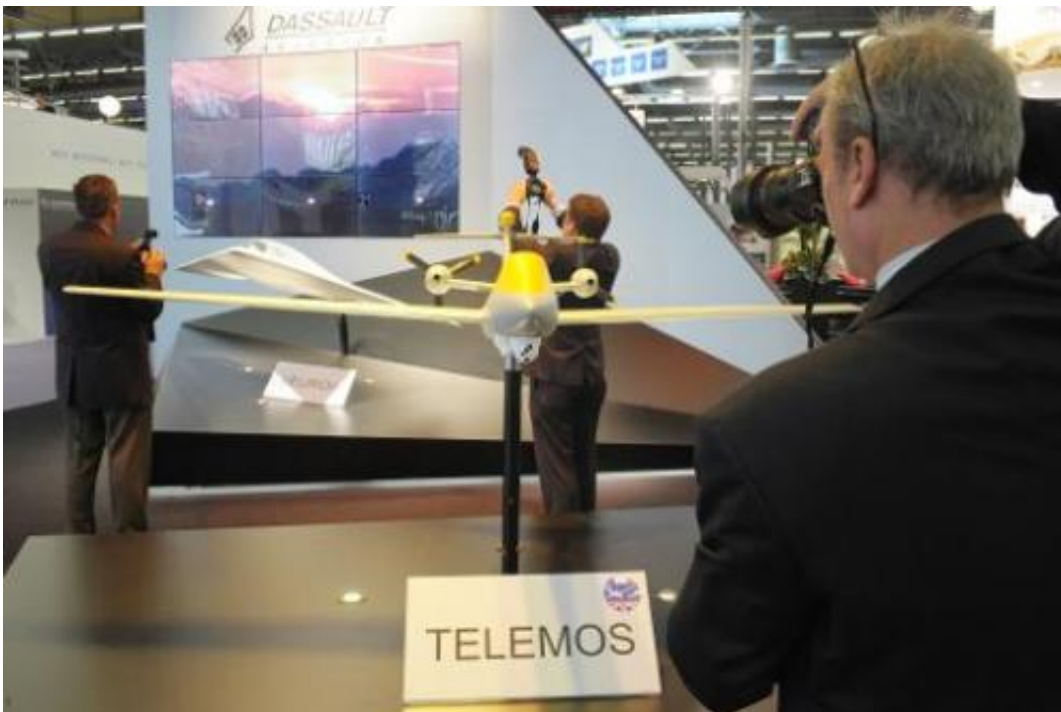


# EU powers to jointly produce new-generation drones

November 19 2013

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Visitors take pictures on French Dassault Aviation stand of models of "Telemos," a MALE drone project, at Eurosatory 2012 defence and security exhibition in Villepinte near Paris on June 11, 2012

Several EU nations including France and Germany agreed Tuesday to join forces to develop new-generation drones, in a bid to close a gaping deficiency in the bloc's defence industry.

EU defence ministers meeting in Brussels approved a series of projects

to develop Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) pilotless aircraft from 2020.

Heads of state and government will formally greenlight the projects at an EU summit next month focusing on defence cooperation.

"If Europe hopes to maintain a strategic capability, countries must pool their capacities and actions in a pragmatic way," said French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian after the talks.

He welcomed the creation of a "club of drone-using countries" that will cooperate on training, certification, logistics, maintenance and future projects.

The grouping so far includes seven nations: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain.

The European Defence Agency meanwhile will work on a combined investment programme to develop the use of drones for both military and civil purposes, such as border surveillance, fire fighting or disaster and environmental monitoring.

EU nations currently use Israeli or US military [drones](#) but do not have certification to fly them in European airspace.

Three big industrial groups, EADS, France's Dassault Aviation and Italy's Finmeccanica offered in June to work together to develop a MALE if given the go-ahead by governments.

Ministers also called for cooperation in developing air-refuelling capabilities after EU nations were obliged to rely on the United States during the NATO-led air campaign in Libya in 2011.

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