

Renault tries to reassure partner Nissan on Fiat plans

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Renault officials on Wednesday sought to reassure the firm's alliance partner Nissan over a possible tie-up between the French automaker and Fiat Chrysler, which could up-end the auto industry.

Renault and Nissan representatives were meeting outside Tokyo on Wednesday along with officials from the third partner in their [alliance](#), Mitsubishi Motors.

The alliance has been rocked by the arrest of its former head, Carlos Ghosn, the Nissan chief who faces four charges of financial misconduct and has been pushed out of all his executive roles.

And the partnership was shaken further this week by news that Renault is studying "with interest" a 50-50 merger proposal with Fiat Chrysler (FCA), a prospect that took Nissan by surprise.

In a brief statement, the alliance said their operating board meeting on Wednesday included "open and transparent discussion on FCA's recent proposal to Groupe Renault."

"The meeting also discussed and positively concluded several current operational alliance matters," the statement added, after the meeting at Nissan's headquarters in Yokohama.

Arriving in Japan on Tuesday, Renault chairman Jean-Dominique Senard offered an optimistic assessment.

"I think that all the recent events are very good for the alliance, and I will make sure that Nissan and Mitsubishi will take great advantage of the news," he said.

But Nissan CEO Hiroto Saikawa has received news of the proposed tie-up more cautiously.

"From the standpoint of Nissan's interests, we need to look a little closer to see what sort of contractual relationship the deal would create," the Nikkei business daily quoted him as saying.

Renault has for years tied its strategy to its partnership with Japanese automaker Nissan, but Ghosn's arrest and Nissan's resistance to a closer partnership appears to have prompted rethinking at the French firm.

The merger with Fiat Chrysler is backed by the French government, which owns a 15 percent stake in Renault, and Italy's deputy premier also enthusiastically endorsed the deal.

Renault holds a 43 percent stake in Nissan, which in turn owns 15 percent of its French partner and would not be able to block it from proceeding with the Fiat Chrysler merger.

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