

Italian govt mulling three offers for ailing Alitalia

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Alitalia, Italy's largest airline, has struggled to compete with low-cost European rivals

Italy's government said Friday it is considering three bids for troubled airline Alitalia from Lufthansa, EasyJet and a private equity firm, and

hopes to have a deal wrapped up by May.

"I can confirm that the goal is to complete a deal before the elections", Economic Development Minister Carlo Calenda said on the La7 television channel, referring to Italy's general election due on May 4.

The three offers received are from German airline giant Lufthansa, US [private equity](#) group Cerberus, and a joint EasyJet-Air France bid, he added.

"The presence of Air France is not sure and I will verify on Monday with the Alitalia administrators," Calenda said of the joint bid.

Alitalia, struggling to compete with low-cost European rivals, went into administration last May at the request of its shareholders after staff rejected job and salary cuts as part of a two-billion-euro (\$2.4 billion) rescue plan.

Workers had rejected a restructuring plan that called for cutting 1,700 [jobs](#) at Italy's largest airline, which is 49 percent owned by Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Airways.

Calenda admitted that there were likely to be job losses whatever the government's decision on the three bids, but promised these would be "kept to a minimum".

According to local media reports, Lufthansa wants to lay off 2,000 employees—almost a quarter of the total on the aviation side—if its offer for Alitalia is accepted.

Alitalia has 11,500 workers in total.

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