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Answer given by Mr Breton
on behalf of the European Commission
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Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission has taken a series of actions to mitigate the effects of the crisis, including on the aerospace industry. These include the adoption of a temporary framework for state aid measures to support the economy in the current COVID-19 outbreak¹, suspending the use-it-or-lose-it rule for airport slots or establishing guidelines and recommendations to help Member States gradually lift travel restrictions and allow air transport operations to resume.

Going forward, the sector's greening will be of high importance to assure not just the decarbonisation of European but also of global aviation. Ensuring the long-term sustainable growth of the aeronautics sector would contribute to maintain employment and conditions of work. The new Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy² outlines an ambitious policy agenda, including for the aviation sector, proposing to have zero-emission airplanes commercially available by 2035. Additionally, with the ReFuelEU Aviation initiative the Commission intends to adopt a legislative proposal to boost the production and uptake of sustainable fuels for aviation. In a similar vein, the Commission's Hydrogen Strategy of July 2020³ highlights the role and long-term potential of hydrogen in the decarbonisation of aviation transport. Finally, the Commission will continue to support research and innovation under the future joint undertakings that will replace the current Clean Sky 2 and SESAR Joint Undertakings.

Ensuring the long-term sustainable growth of the aeronautics sector will also generate employment, and Member States have a role in this to play, too. The Resilience and Recovery Facility (RRF) is just one of the available instruments to them to support the long-term sustainable transformation of the aeronautics sector. Through their national recovery and resilience plans Member States have the opportunity to strengthen the growth potential in industries such as aeronautics, create jobs and improve economic and social resilience.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/what_is_new/covid_19.html

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2329

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1259