

## NATO Commitment to the Baltic States Baltic Air Sovereignty Training Event II (BAST-E II)

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"After the very successful BAST-E in October 2008, we are now making this particular training event a regular item on the training calendar for each Quick Reaction Alert (Intercept) (QRA(I)) deployment to the Baltic region," explained the operations officers in charge of BAST-E at CC-Air HQ Ramstein, Lieutenant Colonel Werner Hartwig, German Air Force.



*POL F-16 receives fuel from KC-135 during BAST-E* Courtesy USAFE

On 7 April 2009, NATO air units from the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and the United States of America as well as a NATO E-3A aircraft used the BAST-E II to enhance interoperability and air integration. Air operations during the event were controlled by the Control and Reporting Centre (CRC) at Karmelava, Lithuania, and

the Ämari, Estonia, Control and Reporting Point (CRP).

Training of both aircrews and ground stations is an essential element in the process of integrating new member countries in the Air Policing procedures. The one-day BAST-E II was an opportunity for the participating nations to enhance their skills in a challenging training scenario.

Crews conducted Air Command and Control (C2) training and practised intercepts, cross-border air operations and air-to-air refuelling under standard peacetime operating procedures. The participating aircraft operated from their home bases meaning there was no forward deployment.

A 'first' during BAST-E II was the participation of NATO's Airborne Early Warning and Control Force Command's E-3A Component



(NAEW&CF E-3A Component), which dispatched one of their E-3A aircraft from Geilenkirchen, Germany.

"It was our intention to make the first BAST-E in 2009 as successful as the 2008 event," said LTC Hartwig, "And we succeeded. Besides the training value, BAST-E II was an excellent opportunity for NATO to demonstrate commitment and solidarity to the Baltic States and provide air C2 training."



*DNK F-16 during BAST-E*

*Courtesy Royal Danish Air Force*

