



Headquarters Allied Air Command Ramstein

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NEWS RELEASE

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First Cooperation of NATO and Swedish Jets in Air Policing Above the Baltic Sea Completed

Ramstein, 24 March 11. The eighth Baltic Region Training Event (BRTE VIII) was completed yesterday with the cooperation of fighter and transport aircraft of NATO and Partnership for Peace (PfP) member Sweden over the Baltic Sea.

“It was great to see how well my Swedish counterparts dealt with the COMMLOSS situation,” says Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Berk, DEU AF, commander of the German Air Policing detachment at Šiauliai, “this event showcases NATO cooperation with partners – when you have a Swedish Gripen pilot handing over a Lithuanian Spartan transport aircraft to a German Phantom pilot who escorts the slow-mover safely to an Estonian airport. The whole process was overseen by Air Traffic Control in Sweden and Estonia as well as command and control (C2) centres in Lithuania and Germany. BRTEs are an outstanding opportunity to practise skills and learn in a multinational environment.”

“I am very happy to be here at Tallinn to see the first BRTE in which a PfP partner cooperates,” said Lieutenant General Friedrich Ploeger, Deputy Commander of Allied Air Command Ramstein, “it is important that NATO exploits its links with regional partners like Sweden to establish and implement common arrangements that enhance safety of air traffic routes. I also appreciate the Polish participation, who provided their C-295 CASA for the COMMLOSS part on day two.”

Contacts between NATO and Swedish C2 installations were established and practised, while aircrews trained hand-over agreements.

“I am grateful for the invitation to the Swedish Air Force to cooperate in BRTE VIII for the first time,” stated Colonel Johan Svetoft, Commander of the Swedish F-17 Gripen wing, “this event helped us to enhance air force relations between Sweden and NATO. It was important to coordinate our measures in how to assist an aircraft in distress. This event was a success; it was great we executed it safely.”

On 23 March the Estonian Defence Forces HQ and NATO Allied Air Command Ramstein conducted a joint media event at Tallinn International Airport. International media had an opportunity to talk to representatives from participating units as well as senior NATO and national officials.

“This regular event is conducted for each rotation,” said Lieutenant General Ants Laaneots, Commander of the Estonian Defence Forces, “it is important for NATO pilots and also for our control authorities. Swedish participation is a good signal. We hope to increase the participation of regional partners.” He underlined the political importance of BRTEs saying “It is very helpful that NATO shows its presence here.”

“We are happy to host the BRTEs,” added Brigadier General Valeri Saar, Commander Estonian Air Force, “it is an excellent opportunity for Baltic air controllers (BALTNET) to train Air Policing execution. BRTE VIII was also about civil-military cooperation. Yesterday Swedish and Estonian Air Traffic Control (ATC) were involved, and today Polish, Estonian and Latvian ATC coordinated with the military. This is the main task to coordinate to ensure that if something happens in the airspace, the

military and civilian authorities can cooperate in landing an aircraft in distress safely at one of the airports in EST, LVA and LTU.”

BREs are routine training events to hone NATO’s air capability and exercise rotational NATO Air Policing assets. The ninth sequel of BRE series is scheduled to take place in Latvia in July.

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Note to editors:

For further information please check the HQ AC Ramstein website www.airn.nato.int , contact LtCol Thomas Dillschneider at airn.pao@airn.nato.int or phone +49 6371 40 2060

Link to HQ AC Ramstein BRE sites www.airn.nato.int/brte_VIII

Air Baltic 2011 – German Air Force site www.luftwaffe.de

Link to Estonian force sites www.mil.ee

Link to Lithuanian forces sites www.kam.lt/en/

Link to Swedish air force sites in English www.forsvarsmakten.se

Link to Polish air force site www.sp.mil.pl