

NATO Parliamentarians visit HQ Allied Air Command Ramstein

On Wednesday, 26 September, some fifty members of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NPA) from 11 NATO member countries and 2 Partner nations arrived at HQ Allied Air Command Ramstein (HQ AC Ramstein) to receive first-hand information of topical issues for the Alliance.

After welcoming the group to the HQ, Lieutenant General Friedrich Wilhelm Ploeger, Deputy Commander of Allied Air Command Ramstein, briefed the parliamentarians about the reform of the NATO Command Structure and NATO's Ballistic Missile Defence.

On a tour of the Ramstein Air Base flight line the NPA members had an opportunity for a closer look at the USAF C-130s transport aircraft operated by the base host, the 86th Airlift Wing.

Back in the NATO Air Headquarters, the parliamentarians received briefings about the other operational tasks of the HQ, for example NATO Air Policing - protecting and holding the air supremacy over NATO Member nations.

Later in the afternoon, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, US-Admiral James Stavridis, and the Commander of AC Ramstein, US-General Philip M. Breedlove, joined the NPA at HQ Allied Air Command Ramstein for a presentation and final discussion.

Two of the Assembly's five committees, the Subcommittee members of the defence and security committee and the political committee visited NATO's Air Headquarters at Ramstein. Founded in 1955 as the "Conference of Members of Parliament from the NATO Countries", the Assembly was renamed "NATO Parliamentary Assembly" in 1999 to take into account the profound transformation it had undergone since its creation.

The NATO-PA is made up of 257 delegates from the 28 NATO member countries. Each delegation is based on the country's size and reflects the political composition of the parliament, therefore representing a broad spectrum of political opinion. Delegates are nominated by their parliaments according to their national procedures.

In addition to NATO-country delegates, observers and delegates from associate countries as well as delegations from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe take part in the NATO-PA's activities.