



CC-Air HQ Ramstein

Allied Air Component Command
Headquarters Ramstein

Public Affairs Office



Sunny day and blue skies for Baltic Air Policing change of command ceremony

Ramstein-Miesenbach, Germany 11 May 2009 - On 1 May 2009 the Czech Air Force took over the helm for Baltic Air Policing from the Royal Danish Air Force during a brief ceremony at Šiauliai Air Base in Lithuania. Demonstrating NATO solidarity Czech pilots and ground personnel have started to conduct the Alliance's Air Policing mission above the territories of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.



The ceremony was overseen by Czech and Danish government and military representatives. When the Danish flag was lowered and the Czech flag was raised, the outgoing Danish Detachment Commander Major Jørgen Jørgensen handed over the symbolic key for the Baltic Air Space over Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to the incoming Czech Detachment Commander Major Jaroslav Míka. At the end of the ceremony two Danish F-16s escorted two Czech JAS-39 Gripen aircraft during a low-pass over the air base.



CZE JAS-39 Gripen taxiing by LTC Schreier CZE AF

The Czech Air Force deployed four Czech JAS-39 Gripen aircraft from 21st Tactical Air Base at Čáslav, Czech Republic, to Šiauliai for the Baltic Air Policing mission. This is the first deployment of the Czech Gripen abroad. The detachment deployed in support of the fourth-generation jets consists of 75 military personnel from different units of the Czech Armed Forces. Two officers serve as liaison officers and fighter allocators at the Command and Reporting Centre (CRC) in Karmelava, Lithuania, which is tied into the NATO command and control structure.

NATO's Air Policing is one of the key aspects of common security and defence for the Alliance and preserving the integrity of NATO airspace is a collective task. For member nations not having the full range of Air Defence (AD) assets in their own militaries, like Luxembourg, Iceland, Slovenia and Baltic States, agreements exist to ensure a single standard of security within NATO's Area of Responsibility. In the case of the three Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the Alliance rotates Air Policing capabilities to accomplish the important task. At the end of their leg, the Czech will hand over the NATO mission to the German Air Force later this year.

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