



Headquarters Allied Air Command Ramstein

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NEWS RELEASE

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NATO and Swedish jets cooperate to enhance safety above the Baltic Sea

Ramstein, 14 March 11. For the first time, Swedish JAS-39 Gripen fighters cooperate with NATO aircraft to enhance safety of the airspace above the Baltic Sea. NATO and Swedish control agencies establish procedures to assist unidentified and/or aircraft with communication problems. During the eighth Baltic Region Training Event (BRTE VIII) on 22 March 2011 German F-4F Phantom fighters practice hand-over procedures with their Swedish counterparts. The German fighters are currently stationed at Šiauliai Air Base, Lithuania, ensuring NATO's Air Policing Mission. The scenario involves a Lithuanian C-27 Spartan transport aircraft, which simulates a loss of communications (COMLOSS) above the Baltic Sea.

BRTE VIII, organized by Headquarters Allied Air Command Ramstein (HQ AC Ramstein), is aimed at exercising Air Policing skills and establishing cooperation and standardization. Sweden, as a member of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme, is participating in this routine NATO training event for the first time. On the second day, German Phantoms intercept a Polish C-295 Casa transport aircraft. Additionally, some participating aircraft land at Tallinn International Airport, Estonia, to conduct aircraft servicing and refueling on the ground.

Scheduled since late in 2008, BRTEs provide Air Command and Control training for Alliance air assets and reaffirm NATO's solidarity with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and have demonstrated how NATO ensures the security of Alliance airspace. This time the scope of the training event is to further enhance interoperability and strengthen cooperation with regional PfP members. BRTEs are conducted in compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards.

Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) Uedem, Germany, and the Baltic Combined Control and Reporting Centre (CRC) at Karmelava, Lithuania, handle the air control and reporting for the event. These centres establish contact and procedures with the Swedish Air Operations Centre (AOC) and CRCs. The scenario allows participants to train Air Policing procedures within the NATO Integrated Air Defence System (NATINADS). It also allows to further improve procedures with a key PfP member, Sweden.

"Although rather a routine event, this BRTE is the first time, NATO and PfP member Sweden establish contact procedures, practise hand-over arrangements with the aim to deepen regional cooperation," says Colonel Blokdal-Pedersen, Royal Danish Air Force, who supervises the planning at HQ AC Ramstein, "BRTEs offer NATO a great opportunity to use regionally-based air assets for realistic training and to sharpen standardization procedures with Sweden. A COMLOSS situation can happen anytime and to handle that well enhances safety in the skies."

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Note to editors:

A Media Day is scheduled for the 23 March at Tallinn International Airport to portray BRTE VIII. A separate media advisory is to follow.

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

HQ AC Ramstein BRTE sites http://www.airn.nato.int/BRTE_VIII/index.html

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

Swedish air force sites in English www.forsvarsmakten.se

Polish air force at www.sp.mil.pl