



## EXERCISE HOT BLADE 2023 (HB23)

### Context & importance

HOT BLADE 2023, the 17th helicopter exercise organised under the umbrella of the European Defence Agency's (EDA) Helicopter Exercise Programme (HEP), will take place at Beja airbase in Portugal between 7 and 21 June 2023. The exercise will be the final one organised by EDA. The HEP is set to be transferred at the end of this year to the Multinational Helicopter Training Centre (MHTC), an entity that has already a 10 year "Blade" exercise planning.

A total of 23 air assets (13 helicopters + 10 fixed wing) and some 750 military personnel from nine countries – Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, and Portugal – will participate in this exercise hosted by the Portuguese Air Force.

HOT BLADE 2023 will allow European helicopter crews to participate in a 'Large Force

Exercise' in a joint and combined framework, facing day and night operations and focusing on the integration of joint interoperability tasks throughout a vast range of battlefield missions.

The exercise's main focus will be on enhancing interoperability at the tactical level between helicopter units by using the Composite Air Operations (COMAO) concept in a combined, joint, realistic and challenging environment, and to prepare for modern warfare operations.

Besides this focus, helicopter crew will have the chance to practice operations in a hot, high and dusty environment, simulating the challenges and dynamic conditions that participant forces will encounter when they deploy to current Theatre of Operations (TO).

A Distinguished Visitors Day (DVD) is planned for 15 June 2023, when representatives from participating EDA Member States, representatives of Switzerland, some international organisations, and national and international media will have the opportunity to attend and observe various live training sessions.

### Objectives

The objectives of HB23 are manifold, notably:

- › To enhance tactical interoperability between helicopter units from the participating countries by using the COMAO concept in a combined, joint, realistic and challenging environment and to teach and learn helicopter Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs).
- › To train and practise TTPs with/against fighter jets and electronic warfare means on the ground.
- › To improve interoperability in training and operational tasks with Ground Forces (NVG, low level flying, formation flights, gunnery, etc.) in a live/simulated, full spectrum environment.

## Concept

The exercise will follow a building block approach, which will start with a familiarisation phase and cross-training activities on small COMAO missions in order to create mutual understanding of each participant's equipment and standard operational procedures. As the exercise progresses, the complexity of each COMAO mission will also increase, as well as the number of flight assets involved. HOT BLADE 2023 will be based on the commonly agreed HEP SOP and COMAO planning procedures in the conduct of flight planning and operations, supported by the ATP 3.2.49.

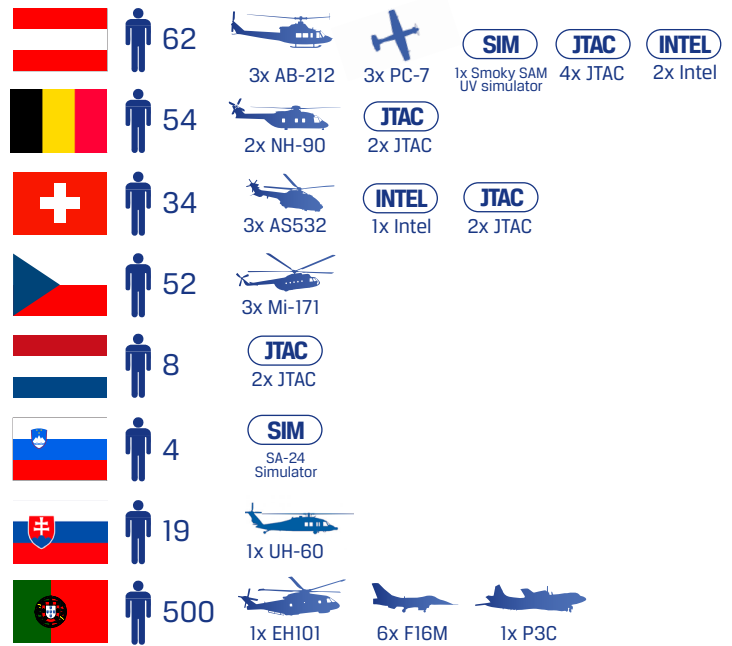
## Mentor Team

Eight instructors from Austria, Germany, Netherlands, and Sweden trained in EDA's Helicopter Tactics Instructors Course (HTIC) will jointly form the HOT BLADE 2023 Mentor Team, ready to support the multinational crews in preparation and execution of the challenging COMAO missions.

## Background

The HEP is part of EDA's wider Helicopter Portfolio aimed at providing Member States with a joint European framework to develop, consolidate and share best practices in order to meet the challenges of flying helicopters in a modern operational environment. Other components of this Portfolio are the annual HEP Symposium, the Helicopter Tactics Instructor Courses (HTIC), the Helicopter Tactics Courses (HTC) and the COMAO Planning and Electronic Warfare (EW) Courses.

## Participants



## Mentor team



## Observers

