

# FIRE BLADE 2017 (FB17)

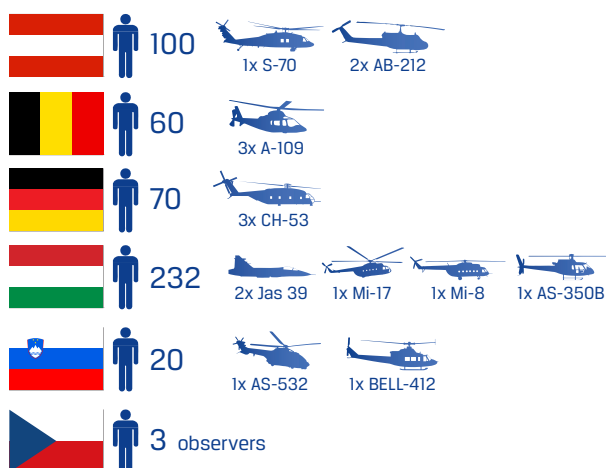


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From 1<sup>st</sup> of May till 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2017, the 11th helicopter exercise under the umbrella of the Helicopter Exercise Programme (HEP) will be executed from Pápa airbase in Hungary.

As of today alongside with Hungary, Austria, Belgium, Germany and Slovenia are the countries of the HEP contributing Member States (cMS) committed to participate in the exercise with a total of 16 air assets and roughly 500 military personnel. The seamless coordination and integration of JTACs into the live firing with air assets and the collaboration with the Hungarian and Austrian Special Operations and Ground Forces into individual scenarios for the benefit of training will be one of the main focuses of the Exercise.

## Participants\*



\* List subject to change

## Overview

The Exercise FIRE BLADE 2017 as a Multinational Helicopter Exercise of the HEP will be delivered by the Hungarian Defence Forces. The HEP is one of the EDA helicopter training projects and programmes. Together with Helicopter Tactics Course (HTC), the Helicopter Tactics Instructors Course (HTIC) and the newly established Composite Air Operation (COMAO) and Electronic Warfare (EW) Courses it proves that at very low cost, immediate operational output can be realized.

FB17 will be designed to allow European helicopter crews to train, adopting joint procedures while operating in a challenging scenario.

## Exercise Aim and Objectives

1. The aim of Exercise FIRE BLADE 2017 is:
  - a. To enhance interoperability at tactical level between helicopter units by using the COMAO concept in a combined, joint, realistic and challenging environment and to teach and learn helicopter Techniques, Tactics and Procedures (TTPs).
  - b. To train and practise TTPs with/against Jas 39 Gripen fighters, an SA-6 air defence missile system and a T-72 tank.
  - c. To co-operate with Ground Forces (GF), Special Operations Forces (SOF) both in the air and on the ground.

2. The Aim of the Exercise will be achieved with the following Objectives:
  - a. To maximize integration of interoperability in training and operational tasks (low level flying, formation flights, FARP training, gunnery, etc.) the units will fly a diverse set of day and night training missions, **with a focus on live firing operations.**
  - b. To execute Close Air Support (CAS), Closed Combat Attack (CCA), Special Reconnaissance and Direct Action SOF operations, Personnel Recovery missions, night flights (with/without NVG), MEDEVAC missions and flying in Nap Of Earth (NOE) missions.
  - c. To train special procedures like marshalling procedures, Fast rope and abseiling techniques, Special Patrol Insertion/Extraction (SPIE), pick-up and drop off procedures, air-to-surface live firing (Helicopter Doorgunnery and sniper training).
  - d. Provide opportunity to practice multinational and national formation and training with the SOF units (infil and exfil) during the exercise.
  - e. To promote EDA cMS dialogue and cooperation.
  - f. To enhance skill of Helicopter crews in using the HEP Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and COMAO planning procedures in the conduct of flight planning and operations.

## Concept of the Exercise

The exercise will deliver tactical training, over a two weeks period duration, offering participants an unique opportunity to plan and execute missions within a joint combined framework. One of the main challenges of the exercise will be to ask participants to integrate capabilities rather than simply de-conflict operations.

The exercise is developed on a building block approach design, starting with a Familiarisation phase, cross-training activities on small COMAO missions, in order to build a mutual understanding of each participant's equipment and standard operational procedures. As the exercise progresses the complexity and numbers of assets in each COMAO missions will increase.

FB17 will be based on the commonly agreed HEP SOP. During the FB17 planning phase, the SOP was completely reviewed to reflect the lessons captured during previous HEP exercises as well as the latest operational experience.

## Mentor Team

During FB17, trained instructors coming out of the Helicopter Tactics Instructor Course (HTIC) will form together the Mentor Team for the HEP Exercise, ready to support the multinational crews in preparation and execution of the challenging COMAO missions. The mentor team for FB17 will include 4 instructors from Austria, Germany, Sweden and the UK. The EDA Chief Instructor (CI) will manage and supervise the Mentor Team to ensure the consistency of the output and the proper exchange of the captured lessons between other programmes (HTC, HTIC, COMAO and the EW Course). The CI is an active duty RAF Squadron Leader, primarily appointed for successful delivery of the HTIC.

Links between the HEP, the HTIC, the HTC and the COMAO and EW Courses assure the implementation of best practice and Lessons Learned what contributes to an increased exchange of knowledge as well as to the establishment of a standardized European wide training pipeline.

FB17 delivers an outstanding opportunity to expose helicopter crews to the training methodology and knowledge of other Member States. FB17 fosters not only the common understanding and methodologies of how others operate military helicopters. It furthermore fosters the building of interoperability and trust amongst the European military helicopter community as a key factor for multinational operations. The ultimate goal for Exercise FB17 is developing to improve immediate output through pooling and sharing training skills among European countries for flying in a different environment and to train for future crisis management operations.

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